

SPY

MARCH 1998

AS JFK JR.'S MAGAZINE
STUMBLES...

What
Will He
Think of
Next?

Plus:

The Agony of Being a Manager-Boyfriend
Ginger Spice on Nelson Mandela

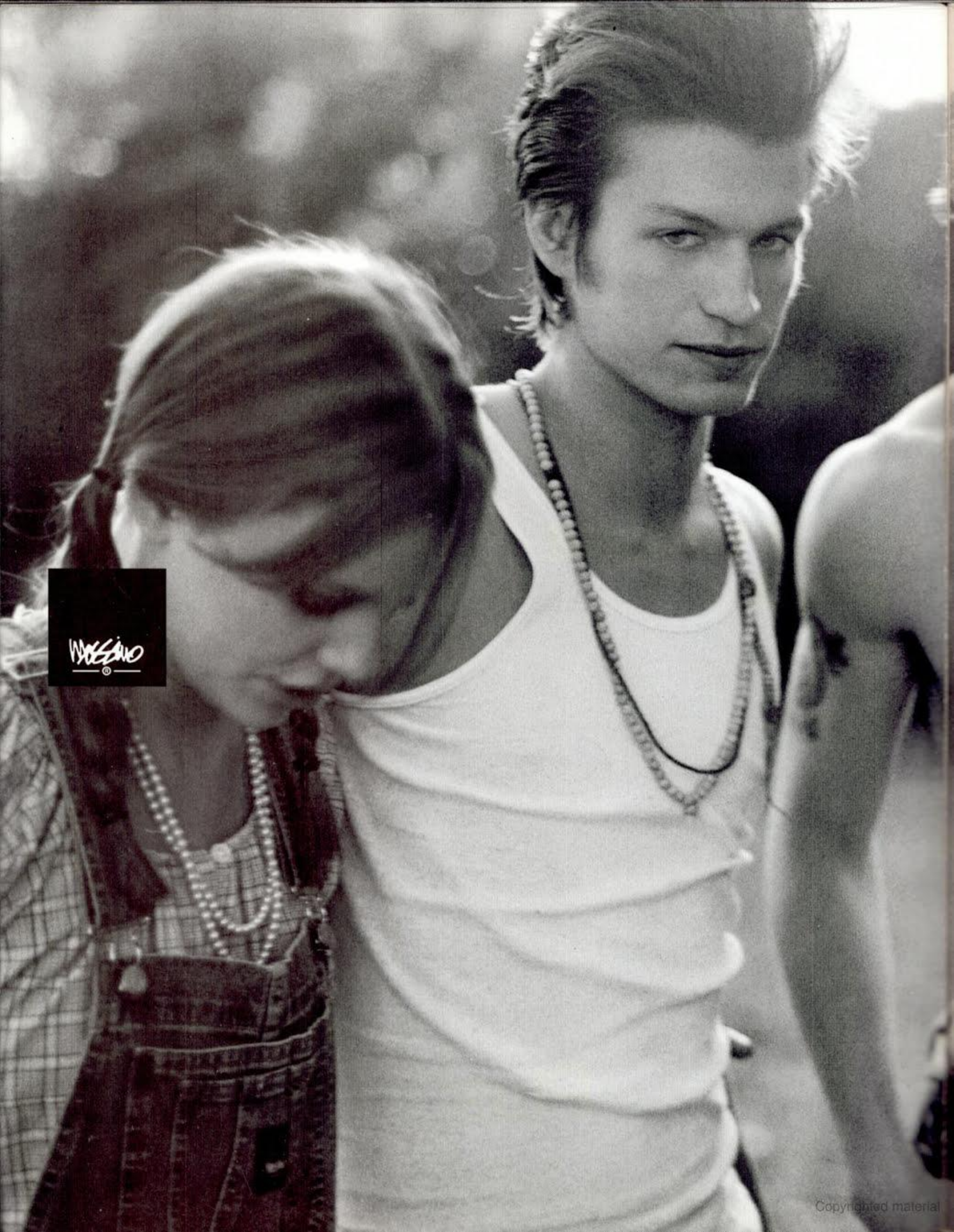
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STAR WITH
WIFE IN WORK-
OUT VIDEO?

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ABOUT CATS!

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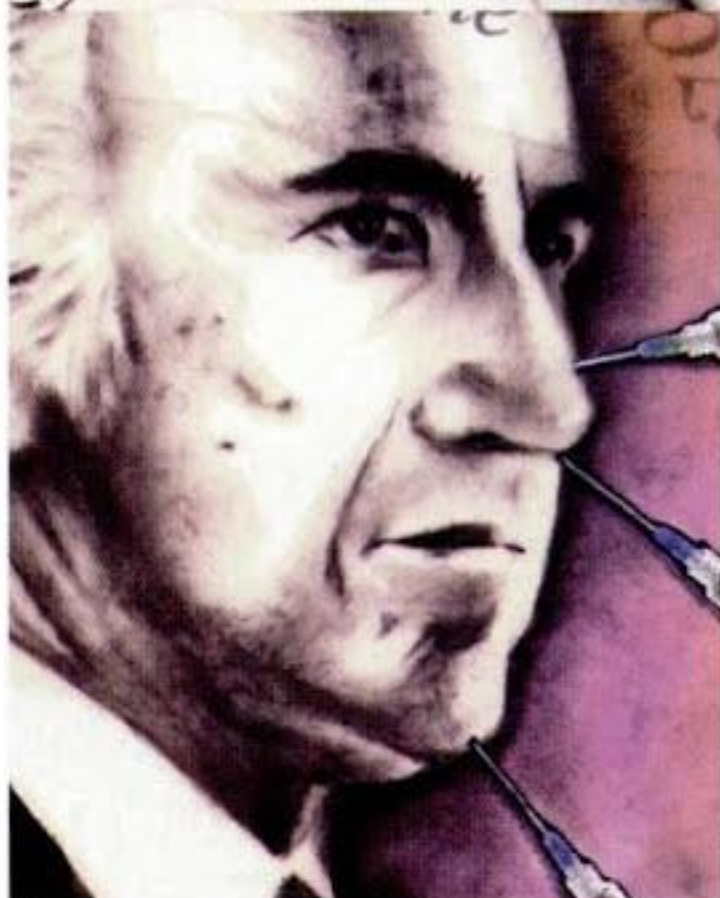


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NOT WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE

TOP: The reason we all dressed like that.

MIDDLE: Ike Turner with one of his less seminal R&B discoveries. **BOTTOM:**

Cholesterol's Jonas Salk.

March Hair

Features

POSTER BOY FOR POSTER-BOY BEHAVIOR 30

Imagine being the only member of your generation not allowed to be a member of your generation. You want to slack, fuck off, read, play your guitar, chase women, dick around at jobs, maybe be an actor for a while? Maybe for ten years? Forget it. Facing expectations frozen in place since 1963, a quite normal guy whose dad happened to be the Beatles and whose mother happened to be the Virgin Mary has been dealing, with middling success, with the most formidable existential crisis in human history. His only chance out of this hole: be a genius. And he isn't one. (On the other hand, who is? David Granger?) So anyway, he has this magazine, *George*, which isn't doing well, and wasn't a very good idea in the first place. What was he thinking? What was his master plan? Some sinister suggestions.

A TASTE OF COCO 40

The great fuel of art of any kind, of creation itself—of suspension bridges, of pasta made with squid ink, of the technique that put that glint of light in the eye of a Vermeer housewife—is the question: What if? What if I put that chair in the corner? What if we slapped some paint on the ceiling of that chapel? What if we ran for president? With an emperor penguin as a running mate? That sort of thing. Here at SPY we asked ourselves: What if John Kennedy's magazine hadn't been based on the world of his father, but on that of his mother? A special preview of what might well be John's newest work-in-progress, if only he'd ask: What if?

YOUR MANAGER, YOUR BOYFRIEND 44

If you want to be a heterosexual man living in a country like America where a huge slaving entertainment industry runs amok across the land, then you run the risk of something very bad happening to you. Fame could descend on your female consort, leaving you with little choice but to become a manager-boyfriend, with all the degradation and large-scale self-destruction that involves. Or a boyfriend-manager. Either dredge up what dignity you can, or if you're feeling lucky, try your hand at serial Jenny McCarthys!

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Will Self looks into the twilight world of Dr. Jonas Salk and comes out with a lesson to save us all.

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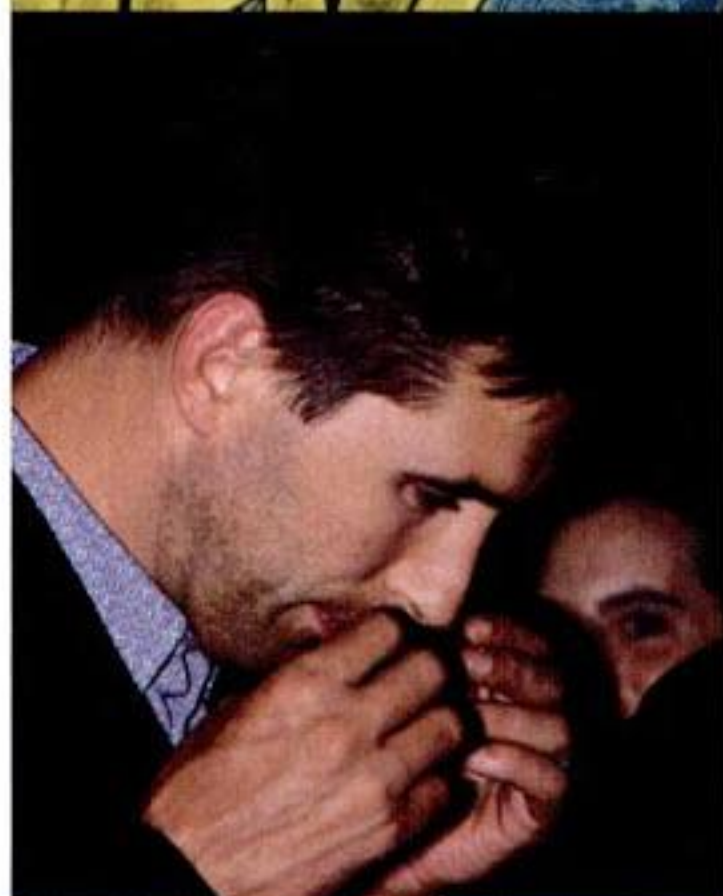
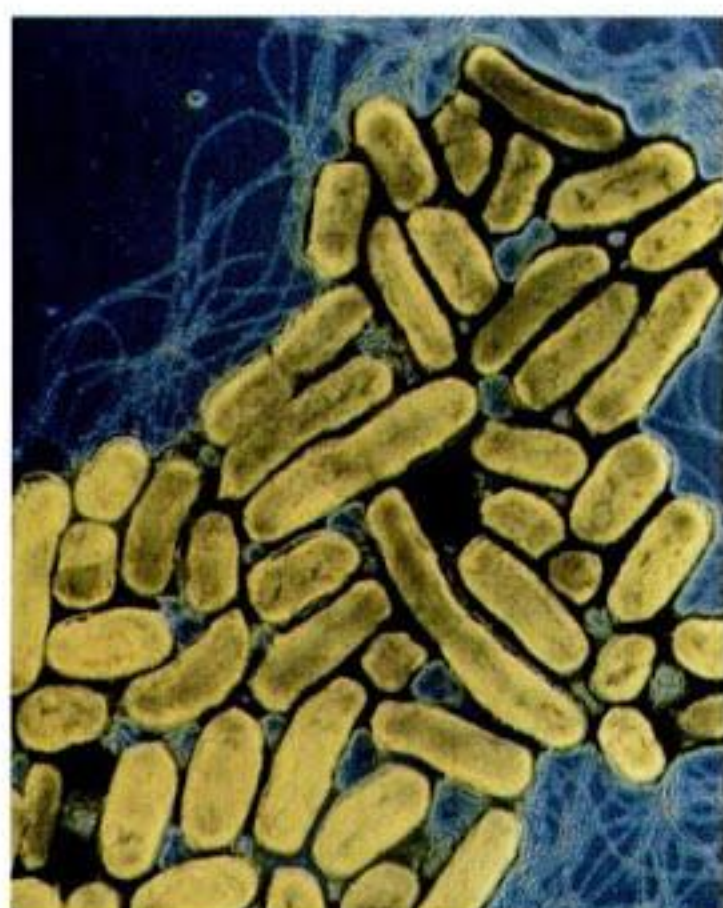
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SOME MORE STUFF

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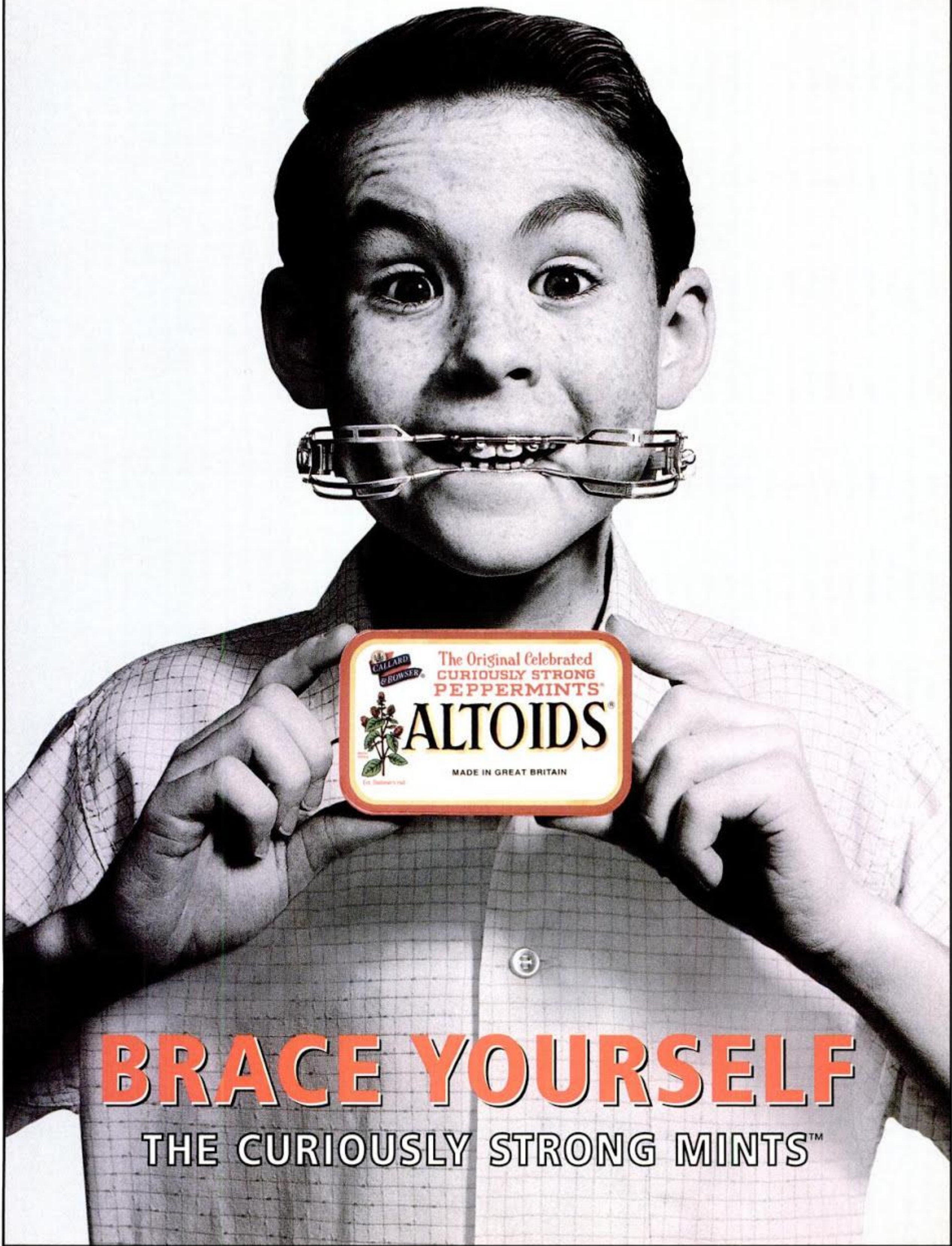
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BRACE YOURSELF

THE CURIOUSLY STRONG MINTS™

EASTER IS IN MARCH

It was with great pleasure that I found myself in conversation some weeks ago with my boyhood idol David Lee Roth. "Hi. How are you this evening?" he bellowed as I moved towards him across the room. Like old friends, we fell to talking, and Diamond Dave very kindly agreed to help SPY out with one of our little journalistic schemes. The next day, however, his publicist withdrew his offer in a communiqué that seemed to be suffused with paranoia.

I may sue—it depends how I feel—but the whole experience set me thinking. If a historical figure like Jesus Christ can reportedly return from the dead, then why is David Lee Roth, the golden boy of a much more recent century, having so much trouble merely coming back from obscurity? Is it really true that there are no second acts in American lives if you have developed hair problems and the new crop of models has no idea who you are? It's a thought which should torment us all, at least once a day.

The resurrection of Christ is a wonderfully uplifting tale, but one that must necessarily take a back seat to the progress of science in making the dream of coming back from the dead a reality for our children and for our children's children. Who knows but that suddenly, three centuries after you're dead, there may not be a sudden flicker of astral light and you find yourself spooning jello in a strange futuristic hospital—unaware of why or how you could have come to be resurrected.

And also there's cloning, which makes our present sense of "reproduction" seem a bit sketchy. You know why people are afraid of cloning humans. Imagine if your clone could remember your childhood. And you're damn tootin' that no-one wants the Nature-Nurture question solved. What if you cloned Einstein, kept him in a fridge box on Guam, and he still had a thick German accent, and a gift for mathematics? What now? we'd all ask.

What would we not all give, immortality aside, for a second lease on life? If after our lives had reached their natural fullness, we were able to come back and finish the job? Even as a wraith. The books one never read, the museums we never visited...but how much more exciting, though, to track down and accost an old friend, perhaps as he uses a urinal, and say, sotto voce, "You thought I died... but I didn't die. Here I am."

Come to think of it, however, this is the sort of line Mr. David Lee Roth is probably already using, though not, in all metaphorical senses, accurately.

Merry Resurrection!

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Fasten Your Eardrums



FROM THE SPY MAILROOM

TAKE A TRIP back in time...it is the early fall of 1978 and you've just finished Turtle-waxing your plastic couch covers as a vibrant John Paul Young comes over the hi-fi proclaiming to the world that "Love is in the Air." You sink into the couch, let his melody invade your mind; you think of Cheryl Tiegs and then...Well, years have passed since then, eight-tracks have fallen out of favor, we stopped using so much Styrofoam, and judging by this month's mailbag, all that love in the air has been replaced with choking strains of hantavirus. Instead of perfume-scented bundles of *billets-doux*, we've received only mounds of dirty scribbles from the likes of James F. Lasseter: "I've been ignoring all those form letters, and considered letting my subscription lapse, but how could I, after reading the Holiday Issue?" Gee, thanks for casually ignoring our hours of paper-cut labor down here, Jim. That's real sweet of you. And as for you, Larry Gaver, who complain, "Match the tartness of one slice of grapefruit with the cloying syrup of a vanilla shake and you have the bittersweet taste left by your Holiday Issue...this issue was very entertaining," we are in no way liable or responsible for the way your magazine tastes (well, there was that one time, but we fired him). So readers, thanks for all the lovey-dovey cards and chocolates. We're all overcome by your love. Really.

Holiday "Issues"

ENTHUSIASTS

I just bought your Holiday Issue a few days ago because it looked like a cool magazine. I got home and read it and it was the best magazine I've ever read. It was so funny! I loved it! All of the other people writing letters saying that they are so offended or mad at you guys for something obviously have no sense of humor at all! I plan on reading every issue of this magazine for the rest of my life! Keep it up guys!!

*Martin S. West
Baltimore, MD*

Regarding "Minority Gift Guide" [Holiday Issue]: brilliantly conceived and executed.

*David Hyatt
Somewhere in America*

Your Holiday Issue was great. It showed, again, that yours is one of the best magazines in the world. But in your Internet thing ["Naked City," p. 24], I was left wondering: did any publication use that phrase more than once?

*Shelton Hull
Jacksonville, FL*

You'll excuse us if we ignore the horrific pathos of your tiny little question and thank you for a lovely compliment.

NEO-STRUCTURALISTS

You know, Toby Young's article, "The 'Plot' Thick'uns" in the Holiday Issue was quite on the mark, but it wasn't really very funny. It begins with the same kind of benign sarcasm I used to throw into my term papers in school, then degenerates into—what? Nothing! Self-righteous, film-degreed claptrap! The least Young could have accomplished was a dig at *Sunset Boulevard*. But instead: praise. It is all just very disappointing.

You'll be happy to know, however, that outside of this article, a missing period in the middle of the third paragraph of this article, and an extra 'n' in the word "unappealing" on page 58, I couldn't find anything else wrong with this issue. Except for the penis enlargement ad being listed under

"Health/Fitness." Who do you think you are kidding?

*Sean Wolfson
Chicago, IL*

I am glad to see, in a pitying sort of way, that Old Toby [Young] continues to plod away at what is left of his craft. Although some might consider that writing incoherent defenses of incoherent writing ["The 'Plot' Thick'uns"] is intellectually tawdry, it has a sort of aesthetic meta-consistency about it that one might admire, but probably won't. Oh well.

*John F. Richardson
Bordentown, NJ*

Interesting. Your depressed, shrugging hopelessness has a kind of meta-consistency with the fact that you live in New Jersey.

HIGH ON LIFERS

Just got done reading your 1997 "Commemorative" Issue. Man oh man, what a "killer"! Way to get the "last word" on those goofy dead folks Dodi, Di, and Mother Teresa. Not to mention "murder" victim JonBenet Ramsey. You certainly put them in their "final resting place"! And the pun on your cover, incredibly tying together "Di," with "die" and "Ellen" with, well ... "die"! To "die" for! With wit like yours about, I'm sure Noel Coward is squirming in his "grave." Unfortunately, I must request you "kill" my subscription. I don't want to "laugh" myself to death!

*Rudy Yuly
Seattle, WA*

Oh be quiet. Noel Coward would have urinated in his trousers if he read that issue. In fact, he might have urinated in someone else's trousers. Maybe even yours. Incidentally, though, he really is "dead." No quotes necessary.

I love your magazine, I love figure skating, I love *Ellen* (and Ellen), and though I was greatly saddened by the death of Princess Diana, I can see and find humor in your article dealing with these topics. They seek (or sought) publicity and therefore deserve what

comes their way. But JonBenet Ramsey does not. The caption under the photo on your editorial page was going way too far. Do any of you have children? Have you lost them? I will continue to subscribe to and enjoy your magazine. But I hope I won't have to encounter any more one-sided skewering of an innocent child. Her parents are fair game; she is not.

*Scott Ronsmans
via the Internet*

That's not what her parents say.

MEAT TECHNICIAN

You may want to have your contributors read the other articles in the magazine before it's published. Dan Bova ["Standing Bull," November 1997] mentions that he finished the last bite of an "undercooked hot dog." Yet in "Diary of a Frank" [November 1997], Lou clearly states (about hot dogs): "You're only reheating 'em, not cooking 'em. Re-heating 'em." Dan's statement therefore should have read "an underheated hot dog." Or is Lou pullin' our chain? By the way, certainly one of the funniest issues in recent memory.

*Michael Younger
San Francisco, CA*

CONVICTED MURDERER

The murder adjective "satanic" from "Death-Heads: Make the Adjective Fit the Crime" [November 1997], confirmed my own analysis of my part in the Manson family murders in 1969. SPY readers may be interested to know that a person who commits a "satanic" crime can still find the mercy of God, though Man may never forgive. I am a living testimony to the consequences of satanic worship. My life should be a warning to all those who would choose to indulge.

*Charles "Tex" Watson
Mule Creek State Prison*

Howdy, Tex. Thank you for the signature in pen, which the mail boy just traded for a Volkswagen.

SELF-PROMOTER

Let me be the first to compliment you on Will Self's article "Angel, Saint, or Male Opportunist in Drag?" ["Dead Men Who Could Save the World," Holiday Issue]. I'm sure you will be bombarded with hate mail, and at first when I was reading, I was thinking, "Sheesh, they're picking on such a sacred cow" (no pun intended). Then I realized that's what

I liked about it. How completely brave to pick on someone so beyond ridicule.

*Jeff Clark
Via the Internet*

Don't be sarcastic.

YOUNG PUNK

Is your catalog [sic] one with cool stuff that you can order? It would be really nice if you could send me a free catalog [sic]. I am in seventh grade. Please send the free catalog [sic] to [address withheld]. Thanks a lot for your time.

*Andrew Stitt
Villanova, PA*

A SPY catalog, Andrew, would contain more "cool stuff" than you can currently imagine. We also would probably charge a nominal fee for its delivery.

Send letters to: Letters Editor, SPY, 49 E. 21st St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10010 (e-mail: SpyMagaz@aol.com).

Please include your daytime phone number and address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND



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-Janet Maslin, THE NEW YORK TIMES

"HILARIOUS!"

-Dave Kehr, DAILY NEWS

"CONSISTENTLY BRILLIANT, FUNNY AND TOUCHING."

-Michele Shapiro, GLAMOUR

"A WONDERFULLY WARM COMEDY."

-Jack Mathews, LOS ANGELES TIMES



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A full-page advertisement for Marlboro Country. The background is a vast, open landscape under a deep blue sky. In the lower third, three riders on horseback are silhouetted against a bright, hazy horizon. The ground is covered in snow or sand, with some tracks visible. The text "Come to where the flavor is. Marlboro Country" is centered in the middle of the image.

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Naked City

Reconnaissance

Wall Street Keeps Weather Eye on Mutilated Corpses, Greenspan's Cash Float, Antipodean Conceptualists

As the Asian financial markets crash briefly and irrelevantly on the other side of the planet, SPY visits the intelligence center of the universe.

Unless someone's trying to spook you into dumping shares of Texaco by spreading the rumor that Houston was just hit by a nuclear weapon, the information available and consumed in financial centers is pretty reliable. If Maui is flattened by a volcano, the local wizard of pineapple futures is going to want to hear about it. Unlike average citizens, who often only want their facts to seem true and be exciting, money people really care about their information being fresh, exclusive, and, where possible, accurate. But there are exceptions. Wall Street is no more inured than your auntie to an exciting rumor or tidbit, and things do sometimes get blown out of proportion. Interested in the nature and quality of Wall Street information, we ventured onto the floor of the **New York Stock Exchange**, and, interacting with the natives, obtained and examined several fascinating samples of information, and observed what information can do to your money. Or someone else's.

RUBBERMAID DROPS THE BALL

Rubbermaid Corporation of Wooster, Ohio, the world's largest maker of plastic containers, is being placed under "heavy scrutiny" by a rubicund trader from E.F. Hutton. He is unnerved by the appearance of Rubbermaid products in a string of deadly murders that reached epidemic proportions this past fall: people are turning up dead in sturdy, economical Rubbermaid products. A 10 year old from Massachusetts was raped and beaten to death, and his remains dumped in a 50-gallon Rubbermaid container. A woman was bludgeoned to death and her body was stuffed into a similar Rubbermaid trash bin only days after the first incident. When reached for comment about the storage of "precious items" in the brand-name containers, a Rubbermaid spokesperson said "Obviously Rubbermaid has a wonderful reputation and a promise to consumers that we will provide exceptional, quality products." Rubbermaid President **Wolf Schmidt**, talking about something else in 1992, presaged the situation (possibly sensing a new, unexplored market) by making remarks about the outrageous mark-

up on coffins. After more than a decade in the top ten on *Fortune* magazine's list of the 100 Most Admired Companies in America, Rubbermaid dropped to number 22.

FED HEAD'S FRIGHTENING CASH FLOAT

The chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, **Alan Greenspan**, is a favorite topic on the Exchange. Usually brokers discuss his policies, but recent chatter focuses on his personal portfolio: Greenspan, the man who can send stock markets crashing if he scratches his eyebrow, *keeps about \$2 million of his personal fortune in cash*. The effect of this information?

"Greenspan announces he's got this cash. People panic. His worth goes up. Mine goes down," says a trader. What's the solution? The consensus on Wall Street may surprise you. "Most people here think he shouldn't have free assets like that," the trader says. "Give all his money to some comptroller, who won't tell Greenspan anything. It'll be like shooting craps, which is what everyone else does anyway."

OMINOUS LOOMINGS FOR SYDNEY OLYMPICS

Persons looking to make money off the Olympics, to be held in Sydney, Australia in 2000, would be advised to be aware of the rumor (courtesy of Ted, a thirty-something bond-specialist who also said, apropos of nothing, that he no longer affiliates himself "with the single-malt crowd") that the "grief-crazed fan" who attempted to "hang" himself from a church balcony at the funeral of former INXS frontman **Michael Hutchence** (later reports made it plain that he intended to do himself no harm) may be a member of a Sydney-based conceptual art collective with further plans to use the 2000 Olympics as a "performance space" for amusing conceptual "happenings." Ted admits that he may have in fact been affiliated with the "single-malt crowd" when he heard this interesting news, calling at least one bit of Wall Street information into question.

Acceptable Discourse

Words for Cold-Weather Soup

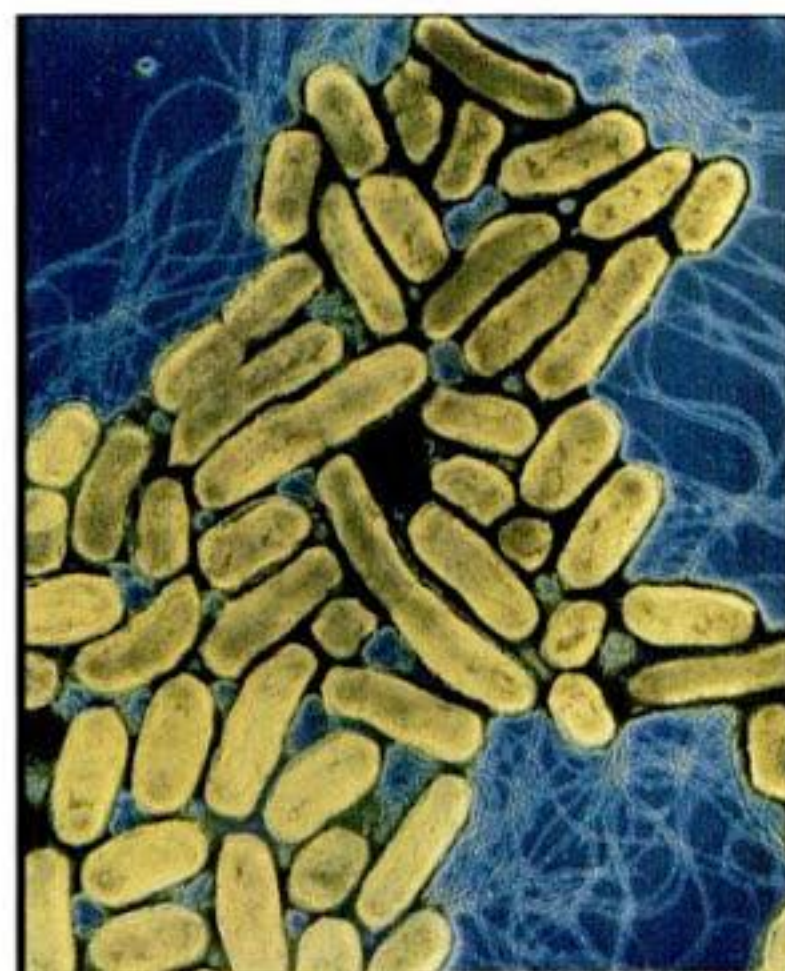
Entities That the *New York Times* Has Decided to Label Either "meaty" or "hearty"

"MEATY"

- Bodies that harken back to the late 80s and early 90s
- Janis Joplin's hand
- Fran Drescher's autobiography
- Business issues that people prefer to discuss in person
- The role of a maniacal, sadistic gigolo
- Men lacking balance, stamina and/or skill
- The amount there is to quarrel about in PBS political documentaries
- The "baggage" that surrounds human bones
- The texts that picture-book illustrators are always on the prowl for
- Slavery, the industrial revolution, and class struggle

"HEARTY"

- Chortling Englishmen who should be avoided
- A big breakfast of crickets
- Electricians, plumbers, and cooks
- Those who try to eat while watching *Operation*
- Viking amplitude
- The will it takes to survive in North Dakota
- Dance moves that are specifically indebted to martial arts
- Unadorned voices used in Gospel Quartet, the God-fearing granddaddy of doo-wop
- The style of productiveness that is lacking in depressed, almost suicidal youths
- Answering a compliment by saying "That's what I'm paid to do"



Nature of the Beast

No. 22: Salmonella

An Ongoing Guide to the Power Players of the Animal Kingdom

(This is our first bacterium.)

"If [the salmonella bacterium] were a person, it would be one of those big, tall guys with their head shaved, down in the cellar of a torture chamber. Or a worm at the bottom of a sunless sea... That's what it was like.

"It did create the most dramatic moment in the history of *Siskel & Ebert*. We were going to tape a show that day and my doctor said, 'You're going to be so dehydrated that you will probably freak out.' I said, 'We have to tape the show!' because we had already rented the satellite time to distribute it with, and he said, 'Tape the show, then I'm going to check you into the hospital.'

"So I put a waste can right behind my seat, in the balcony, you know, where I sit across from Gene. I was drinking mineral water and trying to do my best.

"We got to the first movie and he liked it, but I didn't. And so he praised it. And I said, 'I really disagree with you, in fact, I really *bated* this movie. And with *that*, I grabbed for the waste-basket and hurled. *Enormous* projectile vomiting—*great* volumes. Gene just looked at me and said, 'That bad, huh?'

"But that was about it. I was able to get through the rest of the show. Then I checked into the hospital, they gave me fluids for 24 hours, and I was fine."

—An Exclusive SPY Interview

Foreign Relations

Ginger with That?

Respondents prefer no affair between Ginge and fabled South African leader.

When President Nelson Mandela of South Africa met the Spice Girls, he complained that he felt old around the young pop stars. Gerri "Ginger Spice" Halliwell, never slow to suggest intimate connections between herself and world leaders, replied: "You're not old. You're as young as the girl you feel. And I'm 25!" SPY, uncomfortable with the apparent suggestion that the dignified old man who overthrew apartheid could be taken with some self-promoting tart, decided to find out what the rest of the world thought about the chances of a fulfilling, long-term relationship between the two. Like so many of our more frivolous exercises, it ended up blowing our minds. Someone with a fancy degree and a little bit of "get up and go" will probably be able to build an entire career out of the following statistics.

POLL RESULTS: "DO YOU THINK A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GERI 'GINGER SPICE' HALLIWELL AND NELSON MANDELA WOULD HAVE ANY CHANCE OF LONG-TERM SURVIVAL?"

AGGREGATE:	59% No chance	41% Some chance, however small
MEN:	44%	56%
WOMEN:	74%	36%



NY'er Cartoons

Attach *New Yorker*-ish Cartoon Captions to Whimsical *New Yorker* Illustrations, Win Vague Prizes

A campaign is- very much. And the New Dea- has been those closest landed Yet it' House w per- actually that N- risingl, ge, has tr- tence ge, which beside t nce to tence Again, that strat Elizabeth Dole, of the lan-



Winner

"Wilson...Pudd'nhead Wilson"

—Colin Cigarran, Brooklyn, NY

nother?" is theo- have. If that are express ow we're in an ad And what ve making o with clas- blickingly. ed. for the spring—from raincoats to shoes. Before leaving, Carcelle smiled indul- gently at his designer en repos. "Is every- prepared to was reachin the constan pending or is, the stuf tradition world," h nault to ci to change other execu ward, "that will get mon UH-



Runner Up

"The walls, roofs, and windows are rough- ly rendered, with cursory regard for perspective, but it's home."

—Michael Rodman, Ypsilanti, MI

And, several lerized, all we do if we're reduced; it has bee rite that down. canized, homoger at itself falsified, I of my rary, all blatantly nied. An ooming rror... been dr- gain and ldn't have Frank's or espec readers over the dead now through the telling- something happen into an instrumen- e more crushing gate truth, or anti- the end come.



Depressing Failure

"Hmmm, this is really an excellent issue of Juggs."

—Ken Paprocki, New York, NY

D.C. Eunuchs

America's Least Influential Politician?

Hunting for Washington's King of Not Matterin

Our search for the nation's least influential politician begins with Bob Barr, Republican Represent- ative from Georgia. When not fussing with his hair, Barr enjoys a political career that consists of reciting amateur verse, chatting about God, mentioning folks back home, and proposing bills that either have no hope of becoming law or are transparently symbolic. SPY takes a backwards glance at a futile career:

November 5, 1997: Barr introduces a resolution asking the Committee on the Judiciary to see whether Bill Clinton could be impeached. Republican chair- man of the House Judiciary Committee, Henry Hyde, calls the measure "prema- ture" and Hyde's aides say he wants to avoid empty gestures.

October 24, 1997: Barr suggests that Congress change the name of the Wash- ington National Airport to the "Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport."

September 29, 1997: Barr makes a suggestion. "I include for the record a review of *WACO: The Rules of Engagement* which aired on the *Siskel & Ebert Show*. Both of these respected and widely read critics gave the film a thumbs up...I commend the reviews of this movie and the film itself to all Americans."

September 10, 1997: Barr makes an announcement: "Mr. Speaker, after 39 years in the banking community, Benny L. Tolbert, a resident of Rockmart, GA, in the Seventh District of Georgia, has taken early retirement."

July 17, 1997: Barr takes a hard stand against ambient air-quality standards: "Mr. Speaker, America's children do not need weird science."

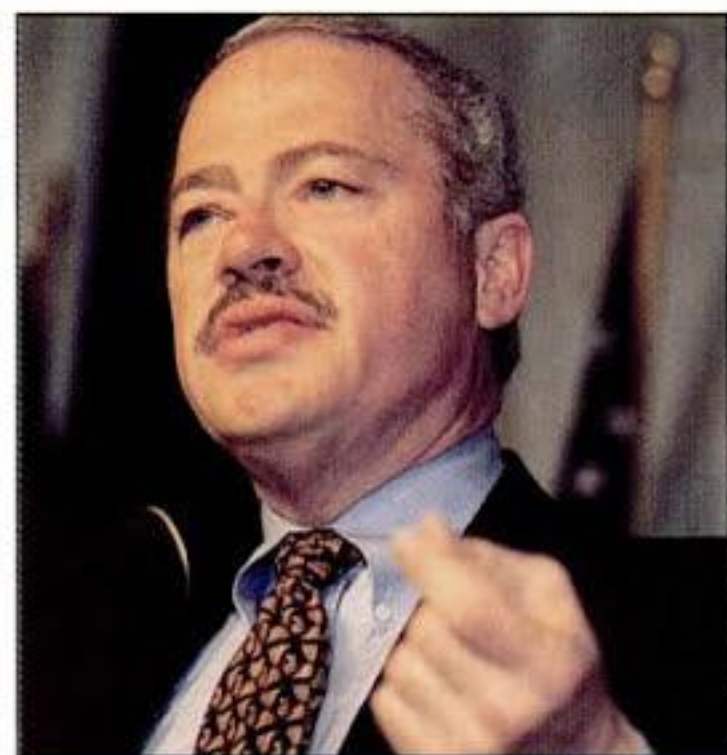
June 26, 1997: Barr takes a trip down somebody else's memory lane: "Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago this Saturday Grover Hobbs and Lorene Fincher were married in Heard County...Their com- mitment truly personifies what marriage ought to be."

May 1, 1997: A busy day: "Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the follow- ing poem inserted into the Congressional Record... 'What My Flag Means to Me' was written by William Watkins, a fifth

grader at Alto Park Elementary School in Rome, GA."

May 1, 1997: "Mr. Speaker, on this National Day of Prayer, I think it is im- portant for all of us and for the American people to realize that we do, as did our Founding Fathers, derive our powers, derive our sense of what is right and wrong...not from within ourselves, but from the hand of God..."

September 21, 1996: Barr's greatest moment: the entirely symbolic Defense of Marriage Act. Barr is one of five sponsors



U.S. REP. BOB BARR

ON HAIR: "The only thing I do is shampoo everyday. Aussie shampoo, recommended by the lady who cuts my hair. No conditioner...I just let it air dry. If I'm going to be out, and I know it's windy, I'll put just a tad of spray on it. Whatever's within reach."

of a bill whose chief purpose is to define the word "marriage" as a heterosexual union, leaving the actual *legality* of gay marriage to be decided by the States and the courts.

December 26, 1995: The first time, of two times, that a piece of Barr's legislation was made into law. The resolution modifies the "quantity specifications" of the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Commemorative Coin Act, "provid[ing] the mint the flexibility to mint more of the popular clad coins, for example basketball and baseball."

★ NOT ★
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C H A N G E .



NOT NOW. NOT EVER.



Tennessee Whiskey • 40-43% alcohol by volume (80-86 proof) • Distilled and bottled by Jack Daniel Distillery, Lem Motlow, Proprietor
Route 1, Lynchburg (Pop. 361), Tennessee 37352 • Placed in the National Register of Historic Places • Visit us at <http://www.jackdaniels.com>.

Your friends at Jack Daniel's remind you to drink responsibly.

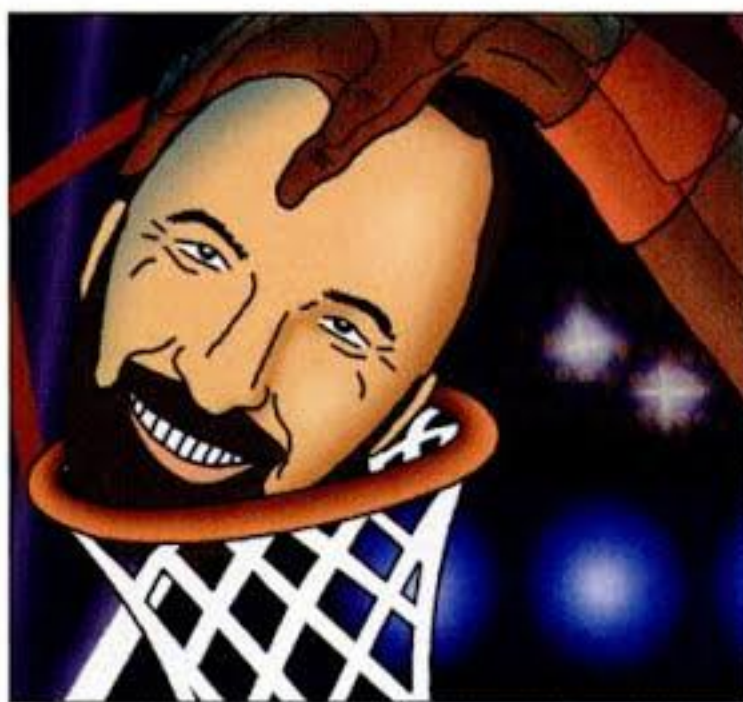
Copyrighted by

Inside Peter Vecsey

NBA "In"-Joke Master Class

Somebody stop this man!

For a week or two after SPY first took aim at Peter Vecsey for the abysmal quality of his one-line "in" jokes, it appeared that he had gotten the message. No longer, it seemed, did each of his basketball columns in the *New York Post* conclude with a flurry of pithy, overly allusive "jokes" referring to obscure players and situations. Since then, however, Vecsey has gleefully returned to his old tricks. Let us reiterate, then, for the benefit of Peter Vecsey himself, should he be reading this, and for anyone whose opinion he values, that the founding principle of "in"-jokery—of jokes that only those *in the know* are able to understand—is the following: if the listener understands the obscure references, the joke should become *funnier* than if he or she does not understand the references. Not *just as* funny, Peter. And certainly not—obviously not—*less* funny. —A.V.



JOKE: "Apropos of nothing or everything, Robert Parish says he has always been impressed by Kentucky bluegrass."

IMPACT OF JOKE ON UNINITIATED: None.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- a. Robert Parish, now retired, was for many years the star center of the Boston Celtics.
- b. The new coach of the Boston Celtics is a man called Rick Pitino.
- c. Rick Pitino's last job was coaching the University of Kentucky basketball team.
- d. Kentucky bluegrass is a type of grass.
- e. "Grass" is a slang term for marijuana.

f. Robert Parish was arrested in 1993 for possession of marijuana.

PERCENT CHANGE IN COMEDIC PUNCH once references are "understood": 0.

JOKE: "I liked woman ref Dee Kantner better when she was in the Jefferson Airplane."

IMPACT OF JOKE ON UNINITIATED: None.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- a. In 1997, for the first time in any major American sport, the NBA has female referees, two of them.
 - b. One of the female referees is called Dee Kantner.
 - c. The frontman of sixties rock n' roll band Jefferson Airplane was named Paul Kantner.
 - d. Paul Kantner has the same last name as Dee Kantner: Kantner.
 - e. It is startling to think of a female NBA referee as a member of a big sixties rock band.
 - f. It is startling to think of someone from a big sixties rock band as an NBA referee.
- PERCENT CHANGE IN COMEDIC PUNCH** once references are "understood": -5.

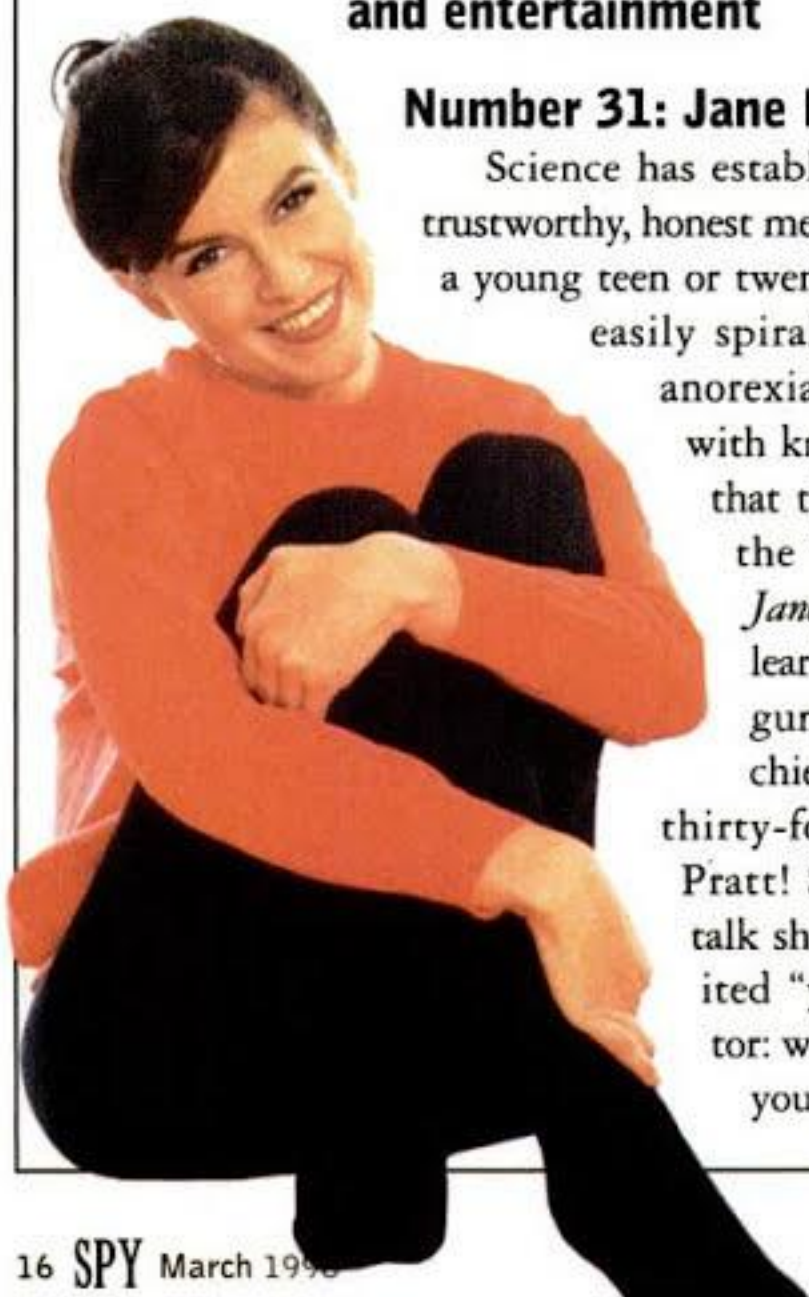
Faux Spring Chickens

Next Stop: the Glue Factory

Hunting down, and celebrating, the brave chameleons of public life and entertainment

Number 31: Jane Pratt

Science has established that without a trustworthy, honest mentor to give her advice, a young teen or twenty-something girl can easily spiral into behaviors like anorexia and cutting herself with knives. Let's hope, then, that the winsome readers of the "hot" new magazine *Jane* aren't too surprised to learn that their scrunchied, gum-snapping editor-in-chief is a clever woman of thirty-four. Well done, Jane Pratt! Self-promoter, failed talk show host, now-discredited "youth" magazine editor: we can't wait to see what you do next!



Number 32: The Internet

Is this a great time or what? Five years ago, if you were a poor, sad person, housebound through injury, and the only thing you'd ever really wanted to do was play chess with someone from Australia, you were quite literally faced with a logistical nightmare—pen pal agencies, long-distance phone bills, accidentally catching the side of the chess board with one of your crutches as you went to fetch a tissue and having to start over from scratch. Nine times out of ten, in the end, it wasn't worth the bother.

And then, "Boom!" "Ping!" "Ta Da!": somewhere around 1993, the Internet arrives. It seems young, feisty, and eager to please. We "install" it onto our "hard drives", we have men drill holes in our walls that we may better connect to it, that we may be there for it, out of the goodness of our hearts, when it stumbles and falls, as young things invariably do. At night, as we shut down our units, having spent an evening "downloading" "software", we know quietly that the Internet has made us feel young again.

Well, you may have appreciated that the Internet is a complicated technical entity, but the odds are you did *not* realize that its complexity extended all the way into the realm of being truthful and honest about itself! Oh yes. The Internet will tell you how to cook loins of pork and what a geologist has just discovered, but what it strangely *doesn't* tell you is that it was in fact invented back in 1968 by the U.S. Department of Defense. For all the talk about the hot new "World Wide Web", wouldn't it be funny if there were suddenly people talking about the "World Wide Cobweb"! Just kidding! Thanks for the clever birthday surprise!



The reason your older sister got pregnant in high school. Do not refrigerate.

Gag Reflex

Midori Sour 'a la Mode'

Mrs. Midori's monthly recipes for the world's most revolting melon-based liqueur

If you still have a quart or two of good vanilla ice cream left over in the freezer from summer...well, then you're a stronger woman than I! Seriously though, there is—contrary to popular belief—no law that says it has to be hot outside for you to take your Midori as a refreshing after dinner dessert. "Here's how!" as Eugene O'Neill would put it.

—Nancy "Mrs. Midori" Geilund

1. Into a wine glass, deposit two scoops of good vanilla ice cream. Nothing cheap.
2. In a separate vessel, combine 2 jiggers of Midori with 1 jigger Sour Mix. Whisk.
3. Drizzle mixture over ice cream.
4. Sprinkle with little chocolate chips.
5. Serve immediately and garnish with sparkling conversation.

Where's Bubbles?

The Chimp Who Knew Too Much

Michael Jackson's former best friend is still missing.

So Bubbles, apparently, was living in a home for unwanted chimps! I hung up the phone, my instincts jangling. *Unwanted?* Back in the eighties, it sometimes seemed as if Bubbles the Chimp—nearly human in diaper and jacket with epaulets, dining on canapés and baring his fangs at **Elizabeth Taylor**, shambling hand-in-hand with the world's most popular entertainer (**Michael Jackson**)—had possibly crossed the "glass barrier" between beasts and human beings. No question, Bubbles had been the highest-ranking animal in the world. And now he was *unwanted*?

After some time with the Yellow Pages, I called the Wildlife Waystation, a home for unwanted animals near L.A. I spoke to the center's publicist **Jerry Brown**, who told me all about the facility, about how it was a home for all sorts of wild animals from all over the country. He was very excited to talk with an obviously professional journalist. Cleverly, I broached the subject of "donated" celebrity pets.



"A lot of the times," said Jerry, "the celebrities don't necessarily want to be *acknowledged* for what they do. Nobody wants me saying, 'Oh yeah, **Mike Tyson** brought a lion cub in.' Maybe because they don't want people knowing they can't take care of their animal."

When I asked him about *Bubbles*, however, he told me that the entertainer's ex-chimp wasn't there—that he had heard the rumors of his being there, but that they weren't true.

Taking the ape by the horns, I called the famous Burson Marsteller PR agency. Paul Flaherty answered the phone on speaker. "I don't have anything to do with Michael Jackson," he said. This was sinister. Celebrity Services charges a pretty penny for these celebrity contact numbers.

It is not possible that they are wrong. "Try Bob Jones at Jackson's company MJJ." I called Bob Jones on his cellular phone and asked him casually if he could tell me where Bubbles was, and if it was possible that Bubbles had in fact been shot by one of Michael's henchmen. There was a pause. "I don't mean to demean the fate of Bubbles," he said, "but your questions are absurd."

Suddenly, I remembered something Jerry Brown had told me. He had let slip in conversation that the Wildlife Waystation was just completing a \$1 million *primate* center this year. Primate. As in Chimp. *Where'd they gotten the money for that?*

I called the Wildlife Waystation again. Jerry Brown said that I would be better off talking to "Martine," the founder of the Waystation. Easier said than done. First, Martine missed a scheduled call. Then she was "away." Then Jerry, who had always been happy to take my calls, was suddenly "on the phone" every time I called. Finally, after days of calling, I got through to Jerry. He sounded frightened. Martine could not speak to me because she was in the hospital. He said he'd call me back. He didn't call me back, so I called again. Jerry was unable to say what she was suffering from. "I tell you, I usually talk with Martine *once a day*," said Jerry, "and I haven't spoken with her in a week."

My hair stood on end as I replaced the receiver. Where was the hairy little fellow, and what had they done with him? What was wrong with Martine? I looked in the mirror. Would what had happened to them also happen to me? Perhaps there was only one way to find out.—Isobel Waxman

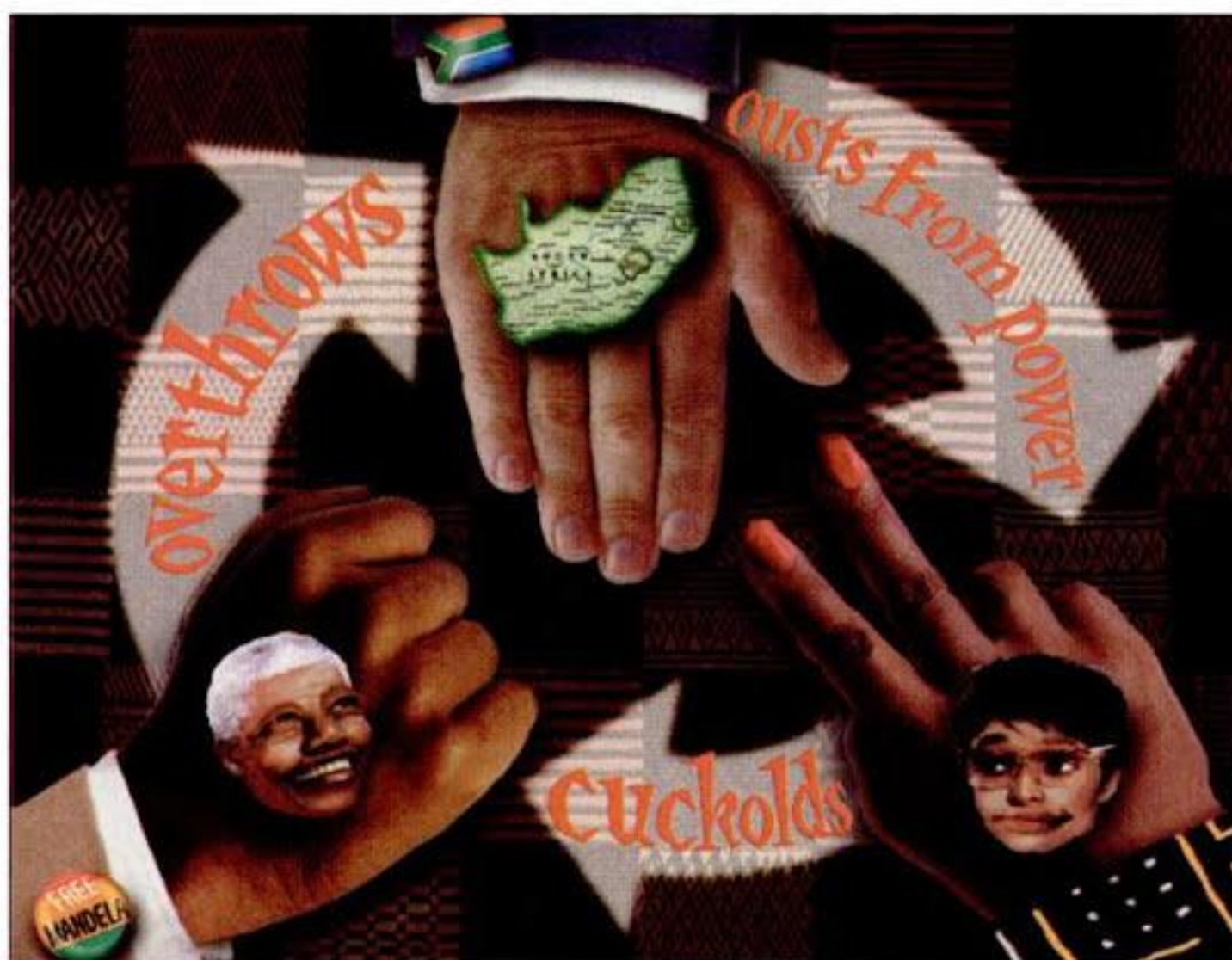
Next Issue: A Chimp-Shaped Blip on the Radar.

Rock-Paper-Scissors

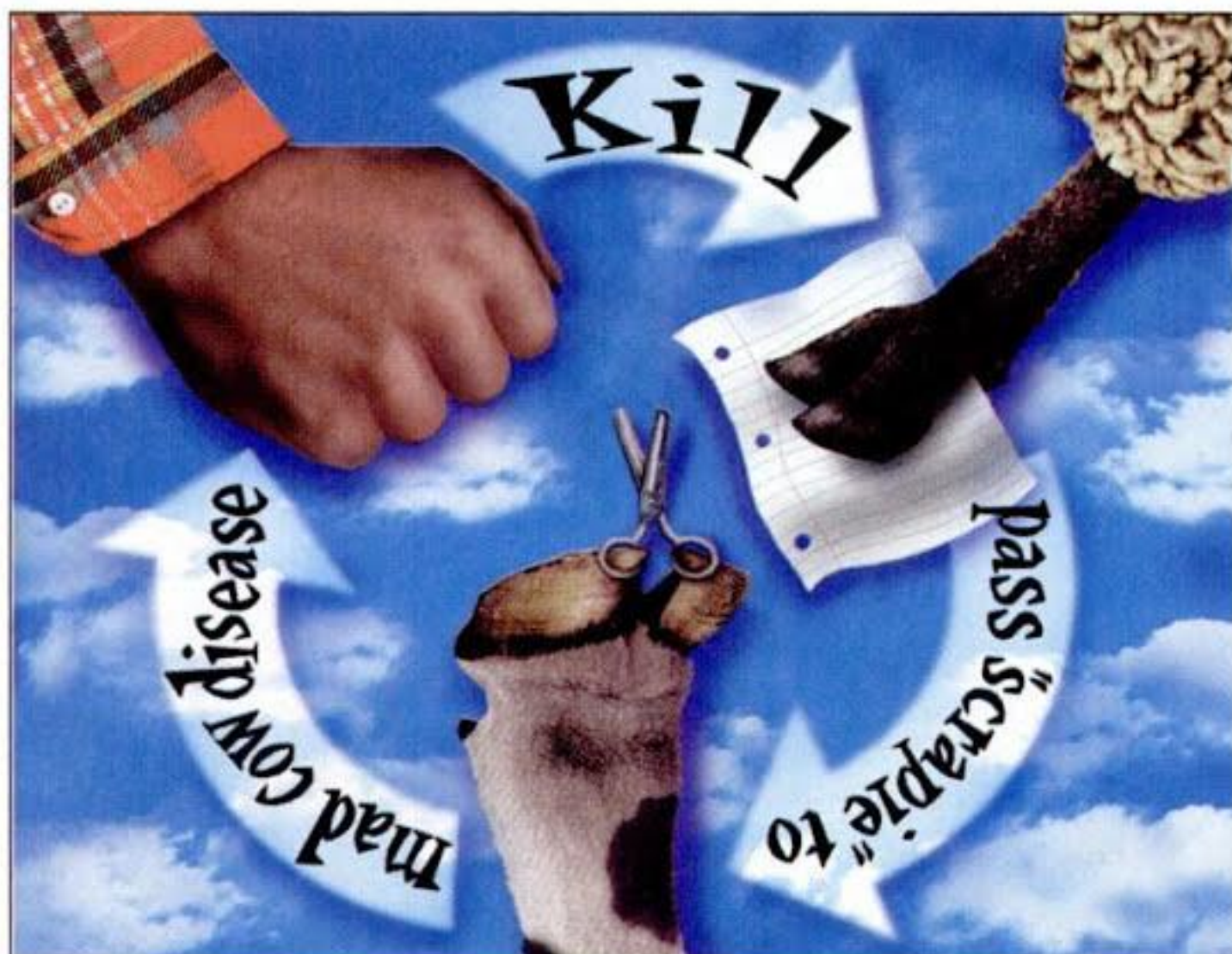
Swift and Perfect Justice

Reality-Based Triangles That Help You Be Fair

As discussed, the classic playground method of settling minor disputes—the famous Rock-Paper-Scissors method, where both plaintiffs count to three, then shape their hands to represent Rock, Paper, or Scissors (understanding that Scissors cut Paper, Rock blunts Scissors, and Paper covers Rock)—*sucks*. Paper may occasionally “cover” rock, but—come on, people!—which would you rather find yourself armed with in a tight spot? Exactly. The principle from which this unwritten ritual draws its authority simply isn’t worth the paper it isn’t written on. Below, some useful improvements.



Nelson Mandela *overthrows* the South African government, which *ends* Winnie Mandela's terrorism; she had previously *cuckolded* Nelson. Farmers *kill* diseased sheep and *feed* them to cows; cows, when eaten by farmers, *give* them Mad Cow Disease.



Birthdays!

75 Years Young

Fishwife and tattletale Liz Smith celebrates her 75th birthday!

It's not for nothing that lively Liz Smith (on right) wears cowprint. Cow-girl Liz, 75 years young on February 2nd, was born in Fort Worth, Texas way back in 1923, when tequila-crazed *pistoleros* in sombreros and huaraches still raided across the border. We can bet that the birth of little Elizabeth McCall Smith made her parents the happiest “Bighorns” in the whole world, even if they weren't still just delighted about the recent defeat of the Kaiser, the invention of sulfa drugs, and the possibility of partial electrification of the state of Texas.

After an uneventful childhood spent in the days before penicillin and television, the plucky little girl from the scarcely Indian-free Lone Star State went to work at Dell Publishing, in the large, frightening, but terribly exciting “Big Apple.”

Liz enjoyed an ordinary office-career at Dell, grappling and crawling her way from one uninteresting position to the next. But she *held onto her dream*, and, as talent will out, in 1976 Liz had her shot: columnist with the Daily News syndicate, a job she held until 1991. Liz made occasional appearances on television, as she does to this day, gaining fame with an audience of “slobbering, sexually disenfranchised matrons” as Cintra Wilson said.

But nothing keeps you young like doing sychophantic spin-control for powerful people and sometimes actually delivering gossip about the already weakened, unpopular, or destroyed. “After the Middle Ages comes the Renaissance,” as the always chipper Liz is fond of saying—and she sure is right, historically speaking. Sly Liz knows however that in the ordinary human life span, though, middle-age is thirty five! A couple of happy returns there, Liz!



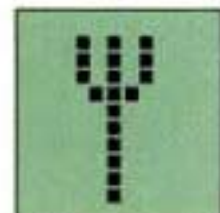
Virtual Career[©]

The Handheld Pocket Substitute for Professional Existence

INSTRUCTIONS:

A new career has appear from college or parent basement to have success and fame! Easy no problems!

Daily Maintenance remember press D when these appear:



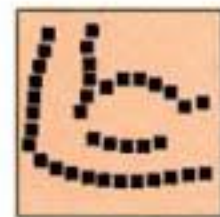
Career must have right foods for interview later on in future! Button a: pizza crust from dumpster. Button b: cold soup from can!



Rounded. Theme of work must be changed every day or career turn one-dimensional like Quentin Tarantino! Change theme frequently. Do not forget!



Pillow. Without sleeping 14 hours daily, no ideas come for making genius! No snooze, you lose!



Social confidence scale! If confidence is small, pressing button d gives points equivalent to conversation with loving mother on phone. Too much pressing and lose edge!



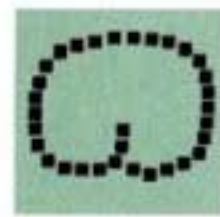
Small visibility and career become futile. Make sure you are expose.



Maybe this mean health concern! Maybe does not.



Career man must sometime have few drinks, relax. Do not press too often. Get work points for no pressing! But no one like a creeping-Jesus!



Ass. Sometime you have to kiss. Not too often! Everything in proportion!

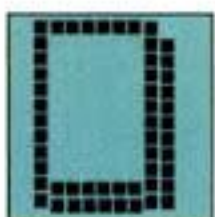
NOW YOU ARE HAVING CAREER

To bring career to metro zone from college you'll have to press the reset button located on the back of the Virtual Career with a pointed substance.

Note: do not press reset button hard when using a sharp pointed substance!

Watch out for following signs! Can be trouble or change of progress!

Begin.



You write novel. Novel tell story of young man coming to terms with either [button A] own genius and gift of words; or [button B] place in universe and narrow-mindedness of own home small town!



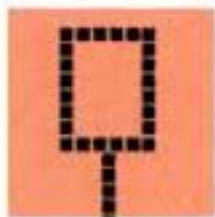
Score! You have win booker prize for terse and manly kunsterroman.



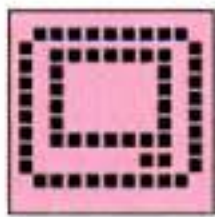
No more top ramen now. Struggle has be worth it. Sweep into Balthazar and have steak frites with Patricia Arquette.



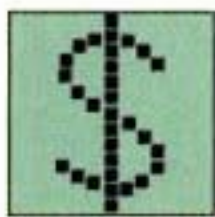
You scored! Now Serena Altshul want you too!



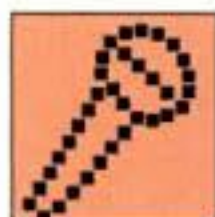
Time for label! Press a for "wunderkind", b for "enfant terrible." Caution! Too many B presses and glamorous self-destructiveing will begin! Press D to Quickly overdose and detox to restore humility!



Website meeting symbol flash, career can grow forward...if accessories correct! Press a for plastic see-through briefcase! Press B for no-prescription glasses with thick frames! One of each, or disaster!



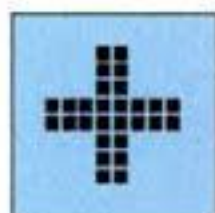
Career now good, quickly press button C to start Bidding War between all media encampments! War!



You are interview by hip pop culture magazine. And why not? Who else. Press A to behave like genx icon. Press B for self absorb asshole. No choice! We fool you.



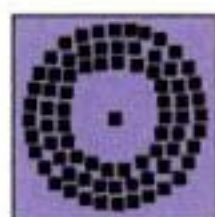
People don't like you. But why should they! Press A to say "they jealous." Press B to say "hmm. Maybe a point."



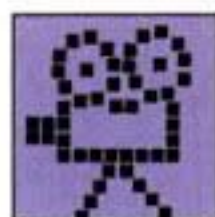
You begin feel wobbly in head as all genius must at times. Press A to continue rehearse play about dancing singing bohemians. Press B to go to doctor. You have press B. Now you will live.



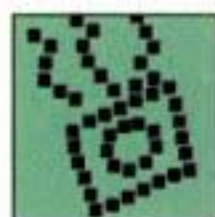
Successful everything at once! You singing dancing man with Pulitzer novel. You direct film now. Press A to be witty at social function. Press B. To change theme.



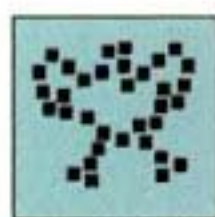
Into the studio. Your album outsell Beatle.



Now film! You win oscar! Best picture-making! Best writer! You are one of very few all time greats.



Oh no. People think you stink. You are overexpose! No one like you. But this is brief. Press A to change pace. Press B to go into politics now.



You are elect president like other Writer Vaclav Havel. Press C to become philosopher-king.



You have achieve apotheosis. Congratulation! It is now time to chill. Press A to go ask mother for cigarette and few drinks, press B to die.

THANK YOU FOR PLAY GAME!



The Valentine Card

Leftly Speaking, with Bernard Livingston

In U.S., Lover's Day is Valentine's Day,
And millions their love profess
By buying a few words from a bard
To say "Be My Valentine."
Well, I'd say we're in a helluva mess
If love's expressed by buying a card.

But it wasn't always so.
In less venal times
You didn't have to cough up dough
For silly Hallmark rhymes
To say "Be My Valentine."
A nice fling in the hay did it better.
And this made Mr. Hallmark whine
That you had ever met her.

But there's big bucks
In the greeting card Biz,
And CAPITALISM knows just where it is.
So, for lovers, they invented
The Valentine Card
Mom's got a Mom's Day card—Santa, his:
All gimmicks to make cash registers ring.
"I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas"
Was one, crooned to millions by Bing.

And still they search for new cards;
They have on contract hundreds of bards
For words to exploit some icon or saint.
Don't care if they're true or if they ain't,
Or good taste says we may or we mayn't,
Long as it follows the money trail.
Cheers rose up when Mother Teresa died;
We hit the jackpot with this one, they cried.

So, to Valentine Cards I'll say Nay.
I'd express love with a fling in the hay.
—Bernard Livingston

Science Gossip with Marcia

A Hot Month Under the Lab Coat

Sexy code nerds; Decrypted *Moby-Dick* predicts the death of JFK; All the hip kids are into relativistic mechanics.

Big Blue hot-shots **Miklos Ajtai** and **Cynthia Dwork** have thrust cryptology into the 21st century, but the likes of you and me won't see their system until "the agencies" investigate. At the end of their tether with RSA, the draggy cryptology your grandfather used, the debonair **San Jose** duo developed a little something called **Asymmetrical Binary Lattice Coding**. The NSA is simply frothing with interest and won't have to wait long. As my source on the inside said, "Please, darling, IBM is so close to the government, they share the same main-frame." Still, the new code will have to undergo *months* of testing, so while Miklos and Cynthia will be sipping bubbly and celebrating, we mortals shouldn't expect Binary Lattice Coding until early 1999, at least!

On the right coast, terribly masculine MIT Professor **Gilbert Strang** has been ruffling feathers with his work on the Global Positioning System! Never one to add something when he can take it away, Strang has found a way to sidestep U.S. government encryption with a technique called **correlative subtraction**. Needless to say, there are *one or two* foreign chappies who wouldn't mind taking a gander. *Hola Bibi! I see you peeking!* And our government, I'm told, couldn't block him were he ever to think of doing something: Strang's a private citizen who works at MIT, not IBM. You go, Gil!

Everyone wants to be first to discredit **Michael Drosnin's** *The Bible Code*. But the newest **Number Theorist** to try is studmuffin **Brendan McKay**, who applied Drosnin's adorable character-matrix procedure to *Moby-Dick*. The results? "Princess Di" next to "mortal in these jaws of death"; "Kennedy" near "shot"; and "Lincoln" next to "killed." All you baby Nostradamuses may want to try it yourself at: <http://cs.anu.edu.au/~bdm/dilugim/torah.html>. I'm sure it's a *whale* of fun.

I hear...that feisty physicist **Dr. Harald Atmanspacher**, of the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, taught **George Sudarshan** a thing or two about Non-Commutative Quantum Time Operators the other night at the **Center for Statistical Mechanics** in Austin, Texas. Seems that Sudarshan, handsome inventor of **tachyon theory**, was none too pleased that he hadn't thought up the idea himself. This all preceded the arrival of **Dr. Ilya Prigogine**, the Center's guru and a Nobel laureate in chemistry. Listening in were A-list quantum theorists **W.C. Schieve**, **Arno Bohm**, and **Matthew Trump**, of pair-annihilation-using-covariant-relativistic-mechanics fame. Ooh.

Speaking of relativistic mechanics, my spies tell me that the gloves are *really* off in the debate over sterilization of **acetabular cups for joint bearing surfaces** down at Memphis State. And remember **ethylene oxide (ETO)** gas sterilization taking on gamma radiation? Which we know can inhibit **cross-linking**? Well, now researchaholic **Jeff Nyman** claims in *his* new study that the process may actually result in oxidation!

Oh, I can't give you the details. I did manage to get a sample, though, and trust me, sweetie, this is the rocket you want in your pocket! Stay tuned!

Me, captured past my bedtime,
at last month's Transplant Expo.



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Celebrity Clout Test

He Ain't Heavy, In Fact He Doesn't Exist, He's My Brother

Fictitious Celebrity Siblings "Michael" Baldwin and "Tito" Wayans Compete for Free Access to Exclusive Manhattan Events, Thereby Testing Their Families' Relative "Hotness"

ROUND 1: Private party for Mariah Carey at premier nightspot Cheetah Lounge, hosted by *Cosmopolitan* Magazine

■ Michael Baldwin

SPY: Hello. I'm Michael Baldwin's publicist. I'm calling to get Michael on the list for tonight's party.

COSMO: Um...I don't recognize the name. I'm a pop culture reject.

SPY: Yes. His brothers are more well-known, Alec and Stephen.

COSMO: He's the baby Baldwin?

SPY: Sure.

COSMO: I don't know if the list is closed. Let me check with PR. [Pause] It should be no problem if Michael attends.

SPY: Great. He's going to have a few friends, you understand.

COSMO: I'm sorry. No. We can only accommodate him tonight.

■ Tito Wayans

SPY: This is the personal assistant to Tito Wayans. I wanted to sneak Tito onto the list for the Mariah party.

COSMO: The list is closed; the party has started. You're quite late.

SPY: I am. But Tito's brother is Keenan Ivory Wayans...

COSMO: I know that.

SPY: Well then maybe you also know that Mariah and Keenan are friends. He would be upset if his little brother couldn't go to the party.

COSMO: I'm sorry. I apologize. Tito is on the list.

SPY: Right. Tito and three friends.

COSMO: Okay. Tito Wayans plus three. No problem.

SCORE: BALDWIN 1, WAYANS 1

ROUND 2: *Vogue* magazine party at the futuristic A-list eatery Le Cirque 2000

■ Michael Baldwin

SPY: Could I speak to someone about the *Vogue* party tonight?

LE CIRQUE: Of course, sir. I will locate someone.

VOGUE: Hi. This is Kate, from *Vogue*.

SPY: I'm Dennis James, the personal assistant to Michael Baldwin. We wanted to shoot him over to your party this evening.

VOGUE: Michael Baldwin? Is that, like, a Baldwin boy?

SPY: Yes.

VOGUE: Oh! He's, like, a movie...like, an actor!

SPY: Yes.

VOGUE: Yeah, that's great! Just ask him...my name's Kate, I'm small and blond. I'll be standing at the door!

SPY: Fine.

■ Tito Wayans

SPY: I'm calling about the *Vogue* party tonight.

LE CIRQUE: One minute, sir. I will transfer you upstairs.

VOGUE: How may I help you?

SPY: I want to slide Tito Wayans onto the list for the party. This is his personal assistant.

VOGUE: Tito Wayans? To be hon...Is he on the guest list?

SPY: No. He heard about the party and wants to drop by.

VOGUE: Could I take your name and number and have the appropriate party get back to you? Could you spell Wayans for me, also.

SPY: W-A-Y-A-N-S. As in the Wayans brothers. From television.

VOGUE: Right. Them.

VOGUE: [on answering machine]: This is Alexandra from *Vogue*. I got your message about Tito Wayans. He is welcome to come if he wants, but this is a book party. Sometimes people associate *Vogue* magazine with models and fashion parties, and we do have a lot of those and next time one of those happens you are welcome to call us, but this is for our food writer and it's very much "foody" people. I wanted him to know what kind of event it's going to be. Bye-bye.

SCORE: BALDWIN 2, WAYANS 2

ROUND 3: Trendy, clientele-conscious Asian restaurant Nobu

■ Michael Baldwin

SPY: I'm trying to grab Michael Baldwin a reservation for ten people tonight. This is his personal assistant.

NOBU: We are sold out this evening.

SPY: How about six people. This is for Michael Baldwin, the actor. You know, the Baldwin brothers: Alec, Billy, Stephen...

NOBU: That's too large a party, sir.

SPY: Maybe four?

NOBU: No.

SPY: He's in *Titanic*. He's playing...James Strathmore. C'mon!

NOBU: Sir, I told you. We are sold out this evening.

■ Tito Wayans

SPY: I'm the personal assistant to Tito Wayans. I'd like to make him a reservation tonight.

NOBU: Tonight?

SPY: Yes. For ten people, actually.

NOBU: I don't have anything for any party that size this evening.

SPY: He's taking some friends, maybe some family, to dinner.

NOBU: It's a large party. I have to see if I can work that in. [Pause] We just can't accommodate ten tonight. You realize how late it is?



SPY: Yes. Yes, I do. Make it six people.

NOBU: [Pause] We can take six. Could he come soon? Say 7:30?

SPY: No. Let's say 9:30.

NOBU: That's... Yes, sure. We'll seat him at 9:30, sir. I'll put that down under Wayans.

SPY: Thank you.

NOBU: No. Thank you.

SCORE: BALDWINS 2.5, WAYANS 3

ROUND 4: Party celebrating the 25th anniversary of the New York Knickerbockers

■ **Michael Baldwin**

SPY: I'm calling to get Michael Baldwin into the party tonight.

KNICKERBOCKERS: I'm going to check if that will be alright.

SPY: Sure.

KNICKERBOCKERS: Here's the deal: if Michael wants to attend the event tonight, have him head down later this evening. The VIP party goes until 7:00 and then it opens up a bit after that for, like, a champagne. So I'll send down a message that he should be arriving for, like, just the later reception.

■ **Tito Wayans**

SPY: About the Knicks party tonight: I'm Tito Wayans' personal assistant. I'm hoping Tito could go to the VIP party tonight.

KNICKERBOCKERS: Sure, that's absolutely no problem.

SPY: Well, you understand he will have to bring a few guests.

KNICKERBOCKERS: That will be fine. I'll fax you over an invitation right away. Thanks.

SPY: You're welcome.

SCORE: BALDWINS 2.5, WAYANS 4

ROUND 5: Jackie Martling's launch party for Jackie Martling's Disgustingly Dirty Joke Book at Caroline's Comedy Club

■ **Michael Baldwin**

SPY: Hi. This is Dennis James, Michael Baldwin's personal assistant. I'm hoping to squeeze Michael onto the list tonight.

CAROLINE'S: As in Baldwin brothers Baldwin? I need to get Jackie.

JACKIE MARTLING: Hello? Who's this?

SPY: Dennis James.

JM: Dennis James the talk show host?

SPY: No. Michael Baldwin's personal assistant.

JM: I don't know Michael Baldwin. [To party] Is there a Baldwin brother named Michael? [To SPY] If you find Stephen, he can come. I feel bad, but I got a line of people waiting to get into this party.

■ **Tito Wayans**

SPY: I want to put Tito Wayans on your guest list tonight.

CAROLINE'S: It's kind of a private party. Um... is he on television?—that's a horrible thing to ask.

SPY: He's in the business. He's a Wayans brother.

CAROLINE'S: I'm going to put you on hold.

ROY: This is Roy. Is this regarding the Wayans boy?

SPY: Yes. I just want Tito to drop by.

ROY: Why is he in town?

SPY: Publicity.

ROY: Look. I would love to have him come down, but security isn't going to let anyone in who isn't who he says he is.

SPY: That's fine, fine. I don't know if you know what Tito—

ROY: Of course I know who he is. We'd love him to come, but we'll know if it's Tito Wayans or not.

SCORE: BALDWINS 2.5, WAYANS 5

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Context Patrol

Connecting the Dot-Dot-Dots

What the Jacket Blurbs Say, and What the Reviewers Actually Said

The soul of mature writing is generally agreed to be *knowing what to leave out*. Literature's Ernest Hemingway had a impressive grip on this concept, as any English major will testify, in between having a grip on a *cuba libre*, a loaded firearm, a disappointed woman, or himself. Knowing what to leave out is also the first principle of *selling* writing. In the increasingly complicated art of quoting reviewers from fancy newspapers on

the jacket of a book, for example, a few ellipses go a long way.

Particularly egregious acts of creative omission have been italicized to convey our sense of indignation.

BOOK: *Dog Love* by Marjorie Garber

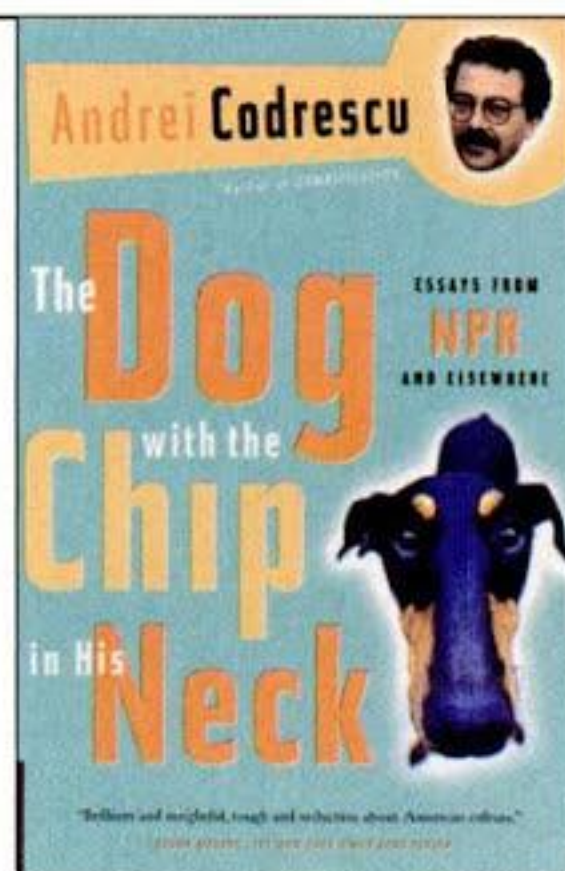
COVER BLURB: "...a full...captivating read."—*Austin American-Statesman*

IN CONTEXT: "Her book is a full, sometimes captivating read."

BOOK: *The Dog With the Chip in His Neck: Essays from NPR and Elsewhere* by Andrei Codrescu

BLURB: "...brilliant and insightful, tough and seductive about American culture..." —*New York Times*

IN CONTEXT: "Super-smart, cutely foreign and occasionally incomprehensible, Mr. Codrescu manages to be brilliant and



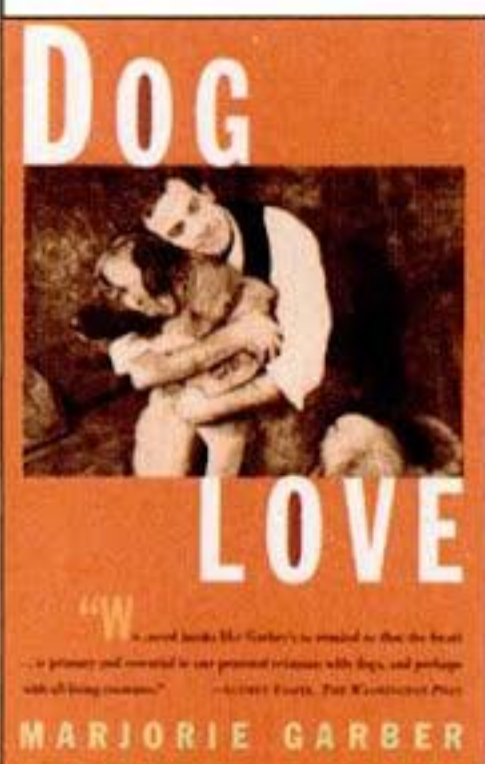
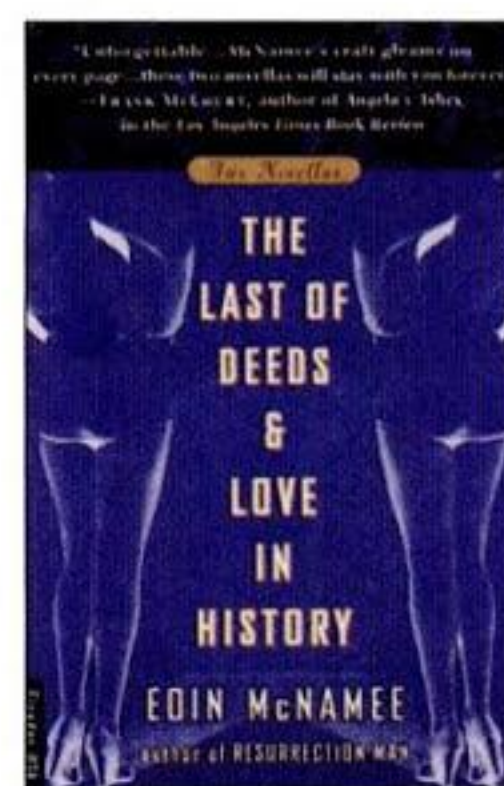
IN CONTEXT: "Unfortunately—despite the compelling setting that beautifully captures sounds, smells, and other sensory data—*The Last of Deeds* never

lives up to our expectations... misdeeds past and present find punishment, but *the plot meanders, relying on some false suspense...* this 75-page work seems like a younger writer's sketch...the characters are a bit too shallow to command strong interest...Mr. McNamee is a writer of such vision and such deft, angry prose that anything by him is worth a look. Perhaps the next book will pack the same knockout power as *Resurrection Man*."

insightful, tough and seductive about American culture *without ever being recognizably right*."

BOOK: *The Last of Deeds & Love in History*, by Eoin McNamee

BLURB: "Compelling... poignant... Mr. McNamee is a writer of such vision and such deft, angry prose that anything by him is worth a look." —*New York Times*



Bluff Call

Safe as Milk

Er, why on earth did you send SPY a press release for your high-security safes?

MEGASAFE: Quite frankly, you're a very "in" publication.

SPY: Really?

MEGASAFE: I deal with lifestyles of the rich and famous and I deal with your next-door neighbor, a middle-class individual. SPY is generally a very what's-happening, up-to-the-latest-minute-in-the-entertainment-club-nightlife-gossip-whatever-way-you-want-to-state-it publication.

SPY: Yeah. That's very kind of you to say.



MEGASAFE: And we're a safe and security business.

SPY: Ah.

MEGASAFE: Fire-proofing, burglar-proofing... Basically, I generally will be reading something in the paper, I may see one of your executives, the publisher, the editor, who knows...

SPY: Neil Wolfe?

MEGASAFE: ...and decide to do what I call a "cold-canvas mailing," or a "cold-

canvas call." Hoping that, obviously, affluent individuals, the people with connections, will say, "Hey, safe, good idea!"

SPY: Hey, a safe! What a good idea.

MEGASAFE: It's completely irrational, yet I have to cater and play with this irrationality.

SPY: Oh, okay.

SPY Invoice

Counting the Cost of Top-Drawer Magazine Writing

FROM ICON THOUGHTSTYLE:

"The turtleneck's 19th Century origins are veiled in obscurity."

—Paid to Thomas Vinciguerra, \$10

FROM VANITY FAIR:

"He [Truman Capote] was both the snake charmer and the snake, toying with toxic insinuation until the spell snapped and he was bitten by his own sound bites."

—Paid to James Wolcott, \$130

FROM ESQUIRE:

"I guess what I'm trying to say is that in the end, we are all just people—"

—Paid to Mike Sager, \$17

Totals based on informed speculation. Submissions welcome.

Bathrooms of Discretion

Supermodels Going At It, Hard

Fashionable Goings-On In and Around Lockable Upscale NYC Water Closets

Stumbling down **Balthazar's** narrow, hard-to-negotiate stairwell under the emetically cute "Toilettes" sign—past a couple of parvenus blowing stogies in leather club chairs—past the coat-check girl who became a model after college and somehow ended up fingering Chesterfields underneath the counter of the *bistro du moment*, one pushes open the door to the loo only to encounter—an *attendant*. Christ. Is there no such thing as privacy anymore? Just how *does* a monkey in a white jacket, dispensing liquid soaps, hair-oil, and urine-tinged sweets facilitate one's use of the facilities? Answer: he does not. No matter: deposit a five in the little wicker graft basket and the lord of the powder room simulates discretion.

There's a single measly stall though, with barely room enough for one occupant. Written on the wall in ball-point: "Darts, Keith." This in simultaneous tribute to

literature's **Martin Amis**—who neatly divides his time between precision sports and thinking up new ways to ridicule the speech patterns of the English working classes—and Balthazar's shifty-looking, pasty-faced, triumphant owner, **Keith McNally**.

The positioning of the stall itself is not exactly ideal: it's in direct line of sight of mutants in the pay phone queue, should the door be suddenly flung open. One could be *compromised*.

And promiscuous door-flinging is not an uncommon occurrence, considering the crowds at the place, even if nowadays the paying customers consist of dentists from Delaware and animal-rightists tossing a dead raccoon on baggy-eyed and unsurprisable **Anna Wintour's plat du jour**. The question is scarcely worth asking. Who goes to Balthazar? Who among

A bathroom with a door that locks. Just like the one at Balthazar.

us knows the idiosyncrasies of its bathroom tiling like the back of their own hand? Who's whizzed here, and done God knows what else?

The other night at *Vogue's* Christmas party, the hot topic of conversation, both in the bathroom and out, was the *contretemps* between two of modeldom's biggest players, the formerly inseparable **Shalom Harlow** and **Amber Valetta**. The source of the tension? Harlow appears on *Vogue's* December cover with hard-partying **Georgina Grenville**. Amber had been fond of telling people how she had leveraged her less-famous pal, Shalom, to appear on a previous cover with *her* and the gal pals had been through a lot together since then: boyfriends, betrayals, apartments, contracts. They came and went as co-hosts of MTV's *House of Style*. But all that water under the bridge wasn't enough to wash away the ill-feeling, the damaged mascara, when Amber got wind of the fact that she had been supplanted by Georgina...

But so much for Balthazar. The grandees and glitterati are fickle beasts at best. They'll come to the place as long as it's a safe bet that the people they admire aren't across town at some cooler spot laughing at them. They don't eat, anyway: the bill for the **Stephanie Seymours** and **Uma Thurmans**, picking inconsequentially at lettuce, is footed by doctors with ambitious wives, who wait for months at a bad table at which to consume large and costly stacked buckets of razor clams and barnacles while waiting to see *just who that is* coming back from the bathroom of discretion in an \$8000 crotchless bodystocking.—*Jared Paul Stern*



Whores d'Oeuvres

Have You Seen This Man?

Who is Neil Wolfe?
Is he really that
desperate for finger
food and supermodels?



Incident One:

A woman named Donna Wilson calls SPY to inform reporter "Neil Wolfe" that The March of Dimes Art Auction, featuring supermodel **Iman**, has been rescheduled. Upon learning that nobody named "Neil Wolfe" works for SPY, Ms. Wilson explains to us that "Dan Bova" (the name of an actual SPY staffer) had called her to arrange press access for SPY Magazine's "Neil Wolfe."

Incident Two:

A woman from the **Ford Modeling Agency** calls to complain that a SPY staffer named Neil Wolfe was rude and hostile with her when he called to unsuccessfully demand access to the Ford Models 50th Anniversary party. We inform the woman that no one named Neil Wolfe works at SPY.

Incident Three:

In line to enter a party for **Bulgari**, a ritzy Manhattan jeweler, a SPY editor hears the man in front of him loudly give his name to the publicity person as "Neil Wolfe. From SPY." The editor taps him on the shoulder, and asks: "Neil Wolfe from SPY?" The man turns round. He is quite tall, with curly hair, glasses, and what appears to be some sort of sinister birthmark on his neck. "Yes, Neil Wolfe from SPY. Who are you?" The editor explains who he is (a genuine editor at SPY), and suggests that, once inside, he and Mr. Wolfe should have a "conversation" to sort out all the confusion. Inside, however, the man vanishes among the trays of **hors d'oeuvres**, and large racks of supermodels including **Claudia Schiffer**. The sketch above is based on that editor's fleeting observations. Do you know this man? Are you him? What are you doing? If you want to go to parties, we'll bring you. We bring everyone else.



JONAS SALK'S PLAN FOR GLOBAL DRUG SECURITY

HE'D GIVE US ALL IMPLANTS. BY WILL SELF

Millions of people around the world probably best recognize the name of Dr. Jonas Salk—who died at age eighty of congestive heart failure on June 23rd, 1995, in La Jolla, California—as that of the discoverer of the first successful polio vaccine. But I don't. I

recognize the name as that of an eighty year old man who died of congestive heart failure on June 23rd, 1995, in La Jolla, California.

I suppose some people might consider me odd—but being literal-minded does have its virtues. Salk's death was a tragedy. Here was this superb man: a physician of brilliance; an inspirational research scientist; the founder of one of the foremost biological research centers in the world; and more than that, a dogged advocate for world peace. Yet he allowed himself to be brought low by a taste for fried food. Time and again I would say to him, as we sat lunching at the Big Boy diner in La Jolla: "Ferchrissakes Jonas, lay offa that muck, will'ya?" But he wouldn't listen and merely signalled to the waitress to bring him another order of burger and onion, cooked in an industrial lubrication oil specially formulated by the great man himself.

"What's life," he would exclaim later, lighting a postprandial cigar the size of a zebra's penis, "if you don't enjoy the good things!"

As well as a bon vivant, Salk was a tireless campaigner for peace—and against war. ("The two," he would often tell me, "are almost inextricably linked.") He called this quest "finding a cure for the cancer of the world." When I put it to him that the cancer of the world was cancer, he completely flipped-out and began lashing me around the upper body

with a test-tube rack, screeching "Why must you be so bloody literal-minded!" And this only days before his demise.

In numerous books, with titles such as *Man Unfolding*, *The Survival of the Wisest*, and *Green Eggs and Ham*, Salk set out his vision of

a world freed from the threat of global destruction. Mostly, these weighty and well-considered tomes failed to find the readership they deserved, but *Green Eggs and Ham* is, I believe, still in print.

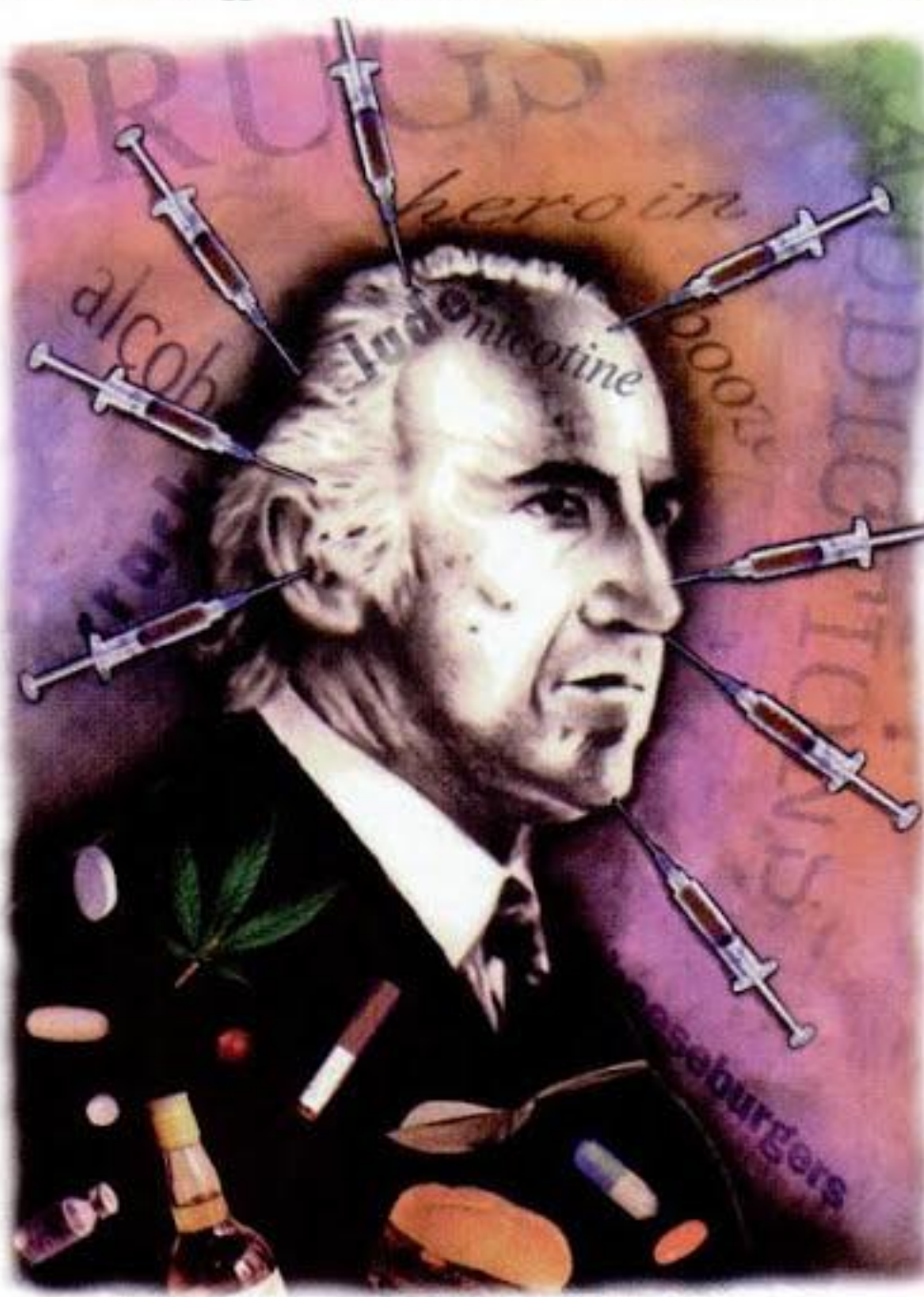
Jonas Salk also devoted a portion of his boundless energy to traveling to international conferences and speaking to world leaders about the imminence of peace. "Peace is imminent!" was his greeting on these occasions, the cheerful prognostication often imparted with a hefty squeeze of the hand. Usually the world leader in question would both wince and titter simultaneously.

Well, old Jonas may be gone, but I wager were he here still, he would be finally reaping rich rewards for a lifetime of disinterested work and compulsive cholesterol consumption. For I can now reveal that in the last few months of his life, Dr. Jonas Salk was working on a new kind of vaccine, a vaccine which in a bizarre way united his two principal concerns: world peace and global pandemic. Salk was working on a complete cure for drug addiction and a victory in the war on drugs—both at the same time!

Never a man to do things by halves (except eating an orange—in this he religiously stuck to the halves, claiming that that was why "God made segments"), Salk saw that the problems associated with pernicious drug use could not be eradicated simply by producing a vaccine against one or other form of chemical addiction. The traffickers would simply think up another deadly brand.

Interdiction, for its part, can never be total—and if it's less than total, it's useless. He also understood that as long as children spin themselves round and round until they grow dizzy and fall over, the human animal will have a drive towards intoxication.

The answer—when it came to him—was alarmingly simple and it also mir-



rored the techniques he had pioneered with the polio vaccine.

"Implants! That's what we'll do! We will implant the drugs in the body of the drug user! That way they won't be able to get at them; that way they will be neutralized—and it will effectively prevent the drug user from wanting to hang out north of 110th Street! At one fell stroke we'll do away with the criminal element in supply and distribution and eliminate the hideous underground drug culture. Fantastic! No more crappy head shops, no more tedious electro-beat music!"

Salk proposed that every single drug user be brought into a federal clinic. There, he or she would be interviewed as to their "toxic portfolio" over any given month. A week or so later the individual would return and have the implant fitted. This device wouldn't simply release a steady stream of narcotics into the individual's blood stream, oh no. It would be subtly calibrated so that if, for example, your drug-use pattern was to make do with 'ludes and booze for most of the month and then let rip with a stonking crack and scag binge towards the end, then the implant would release its goodies accordingly.

"It will be amazing!" Jonas exulted. "The device I have in mind will be capable of such subtle modulation that even an individual who only gets drunk at office parties and then cracks and has a couple of Merit Lights will be able to be accommodated." What Jonas Salk had in mind, then, was no more or less than the eradication of all uncontrolled drug use—legal or illegal.

"Bars will be able to serve colored water after everyone has my implants!" he trumpeted. "People worry about passive smoking—hah! We'll be able to give people implants of such incredibly precise calibration that they will be able to experience the effects of passive smoking, even when no one in the world smokes anymore!"

The last time I traveled to La Jolla, Salk was unable to meet me at the Big Boy. "He's working flat-out on this new vaccine," his secretary told me. "He believes he's even found a way of using it to prevent himself from eating fried food." The next thing I heard, the great man was dead. There was no autopsy—he had a history of heart trouble. But I'd wager, were they to have opened the great man up, they would have found one of the prototype implants lodged in his chest, dripping with cooking oil.

With Dr. Jonas Salk dies our hopes for counteracting this scourge of mankind—I wish he'd listened, about the food.

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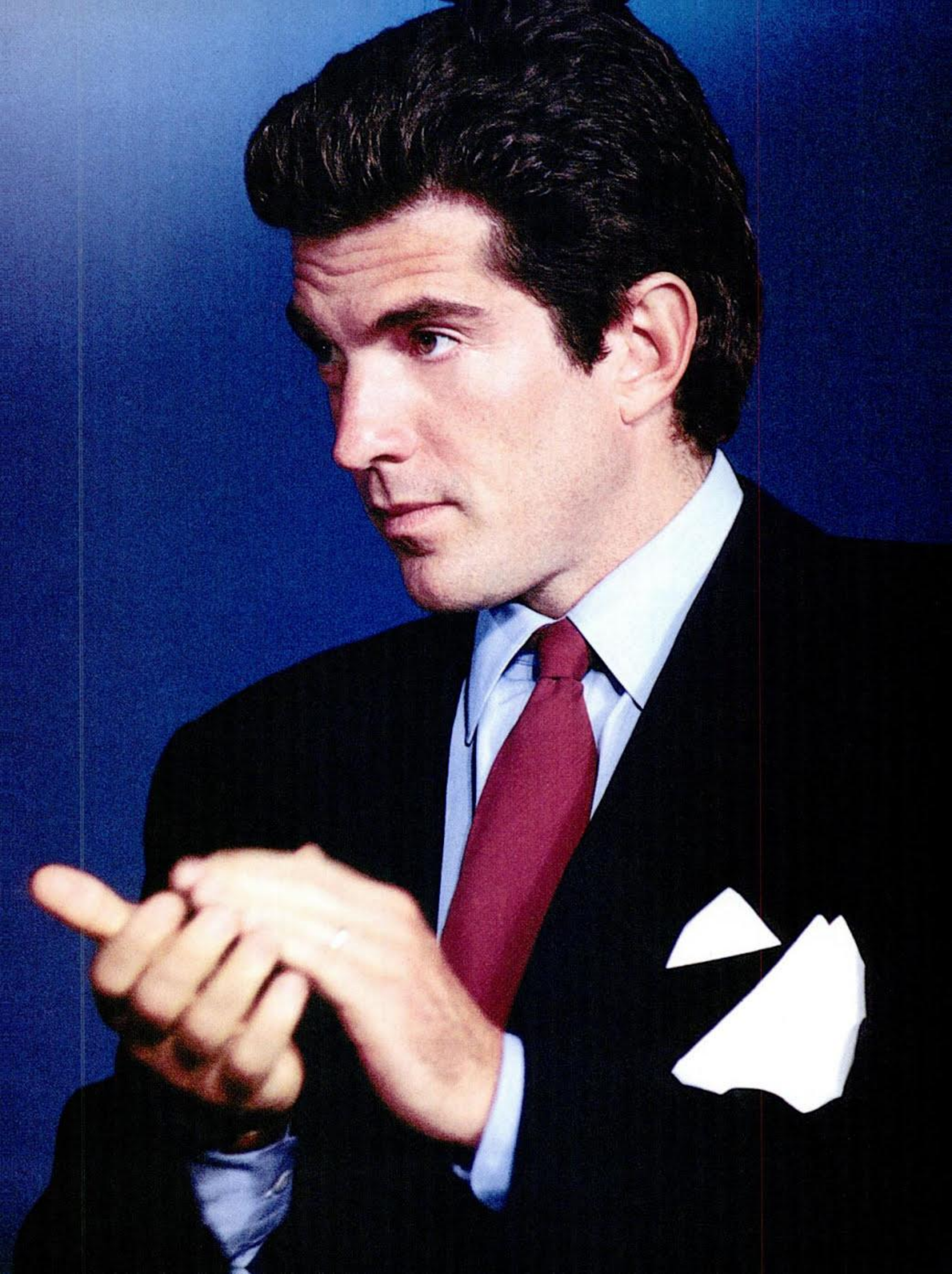


for Poster-Boy Behavior

“If

Did John F. Kennedy Jr. know all along that his magazine about the sexiness of Politics could never survive in the nineties? If so, then for what thrillingly sinister reasons did the World's Sexiest Man try to edit the thing?

as some historians suggest, Americans renew their passion for politics every 30 years,” John Kennedy Jr. began his Editor's Letter in the first issue of *George* two years ago, “perhaps this reawakening is due less to changes of heart than to changes in how the elected communicate to the electorate.” If you have no idea what he's talking about, he was trying to compare his new, giddy magazine about politics and celebrities to the television event that elected his father President over a creepier, sweatier candidate thirty years earlier. If you have no idea why anybody would want to launch a magazine about politics and glamour in the first place, though, given that politics these days is anything but glamorous, then you're not alone. But you know what? It's something you might want to start thinking about.



Birth of a Bad Idea

The first and most obvious thing everybody said about *George* magazine was that it was John Kennedy's attempt to make himself seem smarter. One can see why that would be something he would want to do. From the moment his first-grade teachers tried to flunk him, the John-is-stupid snowball had too much momentum to ever be stopped by merely adequate displays of intelligence. It didn't help that his mother had

sent him to a psychiatrist his first year at Andover for earning only average grades. Nor did it help that she threatened to disinherit him when he was 25 unless he gave up trying to be an actor and packed himself off to law school. By the time, in 1989, that John failed to pass the New York bar exam—he would fail again in 1990—the press had already had plenty of time to marinate sufficient wild boar for a full-scale medieval moron-lynching, and succeeded in enjoying themselves thoroughly on both occasions.

There were also the looks. Voted *People's Sexiest Man Alive* in 1988, Kennedy's two unignorable talents seemed to be for dating babes—Daryl Hannah, Ashley Richardson, the Prince protégé Appolonia, Cindy Crawford, Molly Ringwald, Catherine Oxenberg—and taking off his clothes. Whether he was flaunting the destination of his world-famous chest-hair treasure trail in Hyannisport—or at the \$6,000 a year health club he went to in SoHo—or merely shirtless in Central Park, it seemed a safe assumption to an ogling media that this was a man for whom the human brain was essentially just another ab. Leaving the District Attorney's office in 1993 with the vividly cryptic comment that he didn't want to be “just another passenger on a liner,” Kennedy seemed as ready as the next man to attempt a high-risk intellectual make-over.

The next man turned out to be his friend Michael Berman. Though the son of a New Jersey real-estate developer, and less of an oil-painting to look at, Berman had also entered his thirties without an idea of what he wanted to “do.”

Indeed, in trying to explain to a small child the meaning of the French-derived word “dilettantism,” one could do a lot worse than to cite the example of Kennedy and Berman. After mooching around since graduation—acting and lawyering on John's part; dabbling in PR and theater on Berman's—the pair decided to start a

company called Random Ventures *mass-producing hand-made kayaks*. It was only after a year of low-energy planning sessions that the scheme imploded under the weight of the old proverb, “You can't have your hand-made kayak and mass-produce it, too.” Having cut their teeth on such a timeless piece of wacky entrepreneurship, the pair were more than ready to launch a magazine premised on the inherent groovy sexiness of American politics.

It was over dinner, apparently, that Kennedy and Berman first came up with the idea for the magazine *George*. According to Kennedy's first editorial letter, they “noted that friends who had never turned an eye toward things political were suddenly taking notice of the new faces coming to power in Washington.” The year was 1993. The strains of a televised sax solo by a young presidential candidate with a taste for greasy burgers and trailer park sex were still burring round the ears of an enthused electorate.

No matter that the kayaking community wasn't ready for a hand-made kayak that was actually made by a machine. Maybe *America* was ready for “a magazine about politics for people who think they don't like politics.”

Kennedy and Berman were smitten with their idea, and attended a two-day seminar called “Starting Your Own Magazine.” Though the



Humble Beginnings

A nice guy then, a nice guy now. Conclusive proof, however, that Kennedy did not spend all his time as a child practicing to be a magazine editor.

experts told them it wouldn't fly, their belief in the project was strong enough for them to spend two years shopping it around to various magazine publishing companies. They had little success. Despite the Kennedy involvement, the concept of a non-boring magazine about politics just didn't seem viable.

Finally, they received an offer from the French-based company Hachette Fillipachi, which is financed by the manufacturer of Exocet missiles and publishes such titles as *Premiere*, *Elle*, and *Road & Track*. Publicly, John said they had finally found “one company that knows a thing or two about publishing.” Within months, however, a staffer at *George* would overhear him confessing that the main reason they had signed with Hachette was that he and Berman had skimmed on research and had simply, gratefully, signed with the first company that came along, not knowing anything about Hachette. At the risk of sounding overly dramatic, this would be a decision he would come to regret...a lot!

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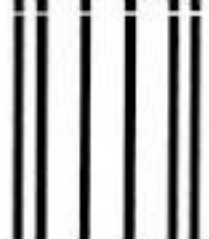
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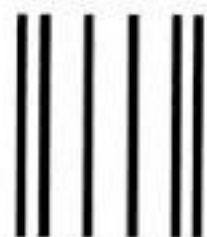
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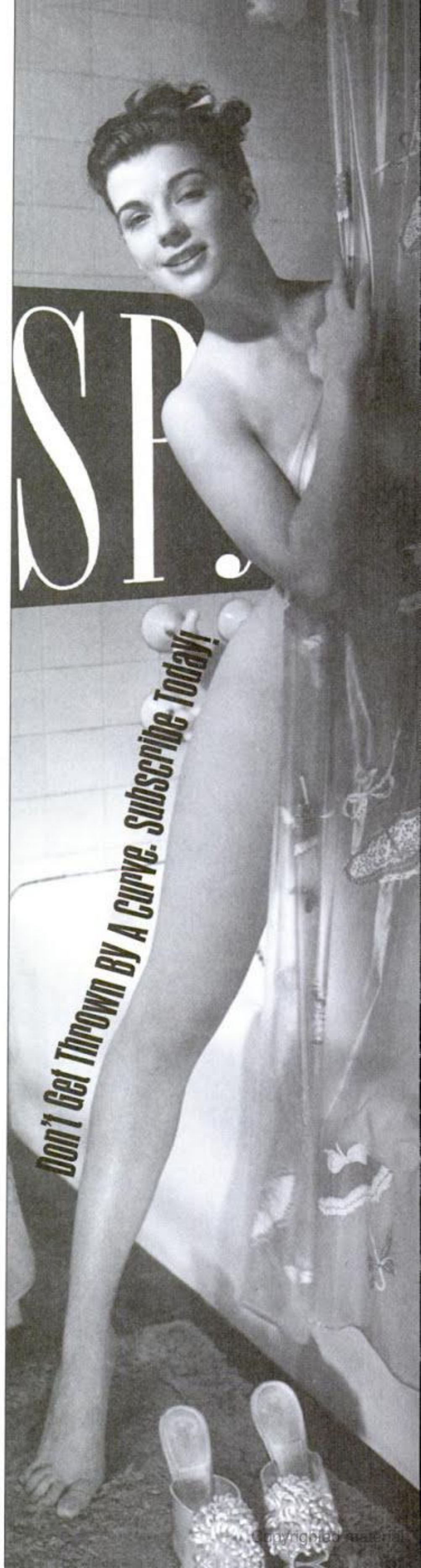
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Things Go Fine

Summer, 1995, then, and *George* was a going concern. Kennedy and Berman had his'n'ers offices on the northwest corner of the 41st floor of the Hachette building in Manhattan and were poised to build an organization. The first staff member was Eric Etheridge, a well-respected former features editor at *Rolling Stone* and executive editor at the *New York Observer*. Smart, methodical, yuppyish, and ambitious, Etheridge had enough of a magazine reputation to at least preempt the best-case scenario of the project's critics: that John Kennedy would try and edit a magazine for the first time ever and *instantly* mess the whole thing up. For at least the time being, it seemed, this was to be a proper magazine.

Finding junior staff was never a problem. According to one founding staffer, the buzz around *George* that summer was so intense, bordering on hysterical, that the long-term viability of the project was a moot point: "I didn't care, to tell you the truth. At the very least, if it died in a year it would be a glorious failure, which was fine for my career." Another staffer pointed to "the glitz, all this money, and the chance to do some serious editing" as his principal motivations for joining the staff. For many, if not most, however, it was all about John Kennedy. "You at least want[ed] to make it to the third interview, when you [got] to meet John," said one editor who went through the process. One freelance reporter demoted himself to an intern, just to be involved.

Kennedy the man, as opposed to the icon, was also getting good reviews. "He was much smarter in person, and much better looking, than I had imagined he'd be," commented one early staff-member. The other pleasant surprise was Kennedy's attitude to the whole venture: managing to exert his good-natured authority without ever trying to hide the fact that he knew nothing about the business. "He often in the early days had the look of someone who was in charge," fawned one employee who left *George* relatively early, "but aware of the fact that the people under

him knew more...He often looked like he was trying to assimilate a lot of information at once." Every staff member, down to the copy editors, fact-checkers, and interns, was encouraged to attend story meetings with Kennedy and to pitch stories. The result, refreshingly, was a relative absence of the competitive skullduggery that exists at most magazines. "There's a good, sort of democratic sense in the office," ventured one staffer. "Which might be part of the problem."

Morale, in fact, was so high in that sweltering summer of 1995 that nobody saw anything unusual all those nights when, as the energetic young staff of the nation's most celebrated startup settled in for the late shift, sleeping in their cubicles—when they had to—alongside their hunky leader, Hachette cheerfully turned off the air conditioners.

In August, after months of development, *George* rented out Federal Hall in downtown Manhattan, where George Washington was sworn in, for the launch announcement. While the hacks, as they always had, reached immediately for their thesauri and volumes of Roman mythology to celebrate Kennedy's physical appearance, there was for the first time a unanimous sense that this might be a man worth actually interviewing. A smitten writer for the *Washington Post* described Kennedy as looking like a "butch Venus from the sea" and a male reporter stood up at the press conference and asked for his home phone number, but for the first time John Kennedy was actually being listened to. As if he had spent the first thirty-odd years of his life in some religiously proscribed purdah, he finally had a voice to tell *his* side of his own life story. A dim-witted fly-by-night? Not so. As he told the *Washington Post*: "Sometimes the weight of expectations, of doing anything, can be a little bit heavy. For me, it's always sort of fun to try to play with the blocks and see what you can come up with that's a little different."

Things were going very well indeed. If, in fact, you had put a gun to the head of a *George* staffer and asked him or her to make a complaint, all they could have pointed to was a vague confusion among the staff, readers, and country in general as to what exactly the magazine was supposed to be. One staffer claims to have been told she was working on "the *Rolling Stone* of politics"; Hachette's advertising director walked into a meeting to proclaim the magazine a political version of *Vanity Fair*; and Kennedy himself went on record with the bizarre opinion that "political magazines should look like *Mirabella*." Presumably, though, this was just the healthy megalomania of any startup, and *George* would work out what it wanted to be as it got older. Right? Right?



An Active Youth

Kennedy threw himself into outdoor pursuits with the verve of a young Christopher Reeve. That helmet's not coming off in a hurry, is it?

When the champagne remnants finally flattened, however, it was time for the bright young staff of *George* to take stock of their surroundings. Certainly, if John Kennedy had been expecting a chic, panelled publishing environment like the one his mother had enjoyed as an editor at Doubleday, he had fallen in with the wrong crowd. Described variously as looking like "a telemarketing firm," an "unemployment office," and "just plain depressing," the New York offices of Hachette Fillipachi are famed throughout the city for their industrial carpeting, dirty white-washed walls, and endless Kafkaesque cubicles. Worse, *George* was forced to share a floor with the airheads at *Premiere* and the mudspattered vagabonds of *Road and Track*. A steady stream of alien temps would saunter into *George* on cock-and-bull assignments to take a slack-jawed gawp at its celebrity founder. Even Kennedy's own office, with its view of the Hudson river, boasted little of the shelving, furniture, and mood lighting for which New York editors' offices are world famous. Requests for luxuries like research libraries, inter-office e-mail, or kitchen supplies were prone to be shot down by the administrative equivalent of one of Hachette's patented missiles.

George staffers also began to notice a certain scruffy amateurism within the upper ranks of their own organization. "It was very much like a junior high school yearbook," said one who was there from the beginning. "Everything there was Junior High. I'm talking behavioral patterns, too."

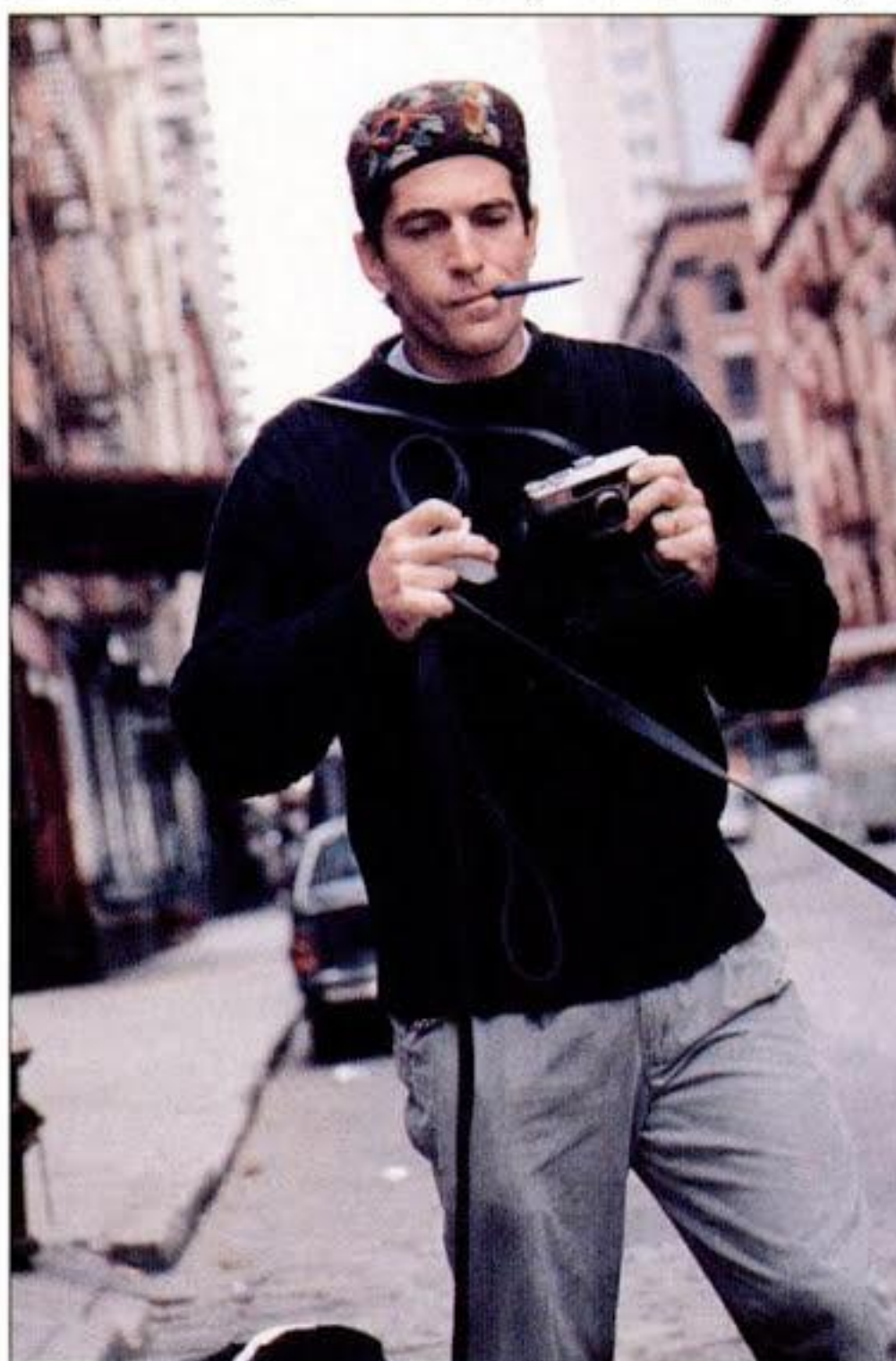
The main problem seemed to be the testosterone-sodden cult of John-John himself. There were the little things: many young male staffers started wearing their wallets on pickpocket-proof chains after they noticed Kennedy doing it. And there were the bigger things, most notably Kennedy's frequent squabbles with Michael Berman over the pointless but intractable issue, as one insider put it, of "who had the biggest dick in the place." The usually mellow Kennedy would yell at his "co-founder," while the staff cowered at their desks. "It was like, mommy and daddy are fighting," said one insider. "We did what children do: we hid." On one occasion, a former intern remembers, "I heard what sounded like a cavalry galloping down the hallway. When I looked up I saw John running into his office with Michael close behind. John slammed the door and Michael proceeded to bang on it, yelling 'John! John! Let me in! I know you're in there!'"

Den-mothering the whole situation was one Rosemarie Terenzio. A high-octane secretarial-college graduate in her early thirties, Terenzio was swiftly becoming a legend in the world of Assistants to the Powerful, having graduated from her role as Berman's girl friday to being liaison to the great John Kennedy

as well. (To this day, it is Terenzio who answers Kennedy's private line, which she does with the words, "Random Ventures.") The resulting tensions—between Rosemarie and Michael, and John and Michael—lent a soap-opera timbre to the entire office. "Sort of *Central Park West* meets *Head of the Class*," calculated one staffer. "Meets *Roseanne*."

"The weirdest thing I witnessed there took place about a month before Jackie's auction," recalls one insider. "We're talking about an idea, and John comes in late, a little flustered and distracted. As we're trying to catch him up on things, the door opens and it's Rosie, her eyes all welled up, which was not unusual, asking for John to step out. We try to keep on with the meeting, but it's really distracting trying to act normal with Rosie and John

hollering just outside the door. Then Rosie steps in, hugging



Is JFK Jr. Really as Stupid as People Say?

"Yes he is. People try to tell you how that New York Bar Exam that he failed all those times is actually really difficult: 'Oh, it lasts fifteen hours... there's no multiple choice...if you get up to go to the bathroom you automatically fail, blah blah blah.' It's all fucking lies. I personally am scheduled to take the New York bar exam next year and my professors tell me that with my level of skill I have *nothing to worry about.*"

— Gordon Frert, student

herself and crying, and asks everyone to either not answer their phones, or if they do, and it's Michael, to tell him that she and John aren't in. If she were anyone else in the world, she would be chastised for her behavior, but it's not, it's Rosemarie. She's not just above the law, she *is* the law. And all these Upper East Side types that made up the staff are sitting there chilled to the bone trying to act normal."

Kennedy's management style in editorial meetings, which had seemed so creatively democratic in the summer before *George*'s launch, appeared to be devolving slightly towards capriciousness. "He was so egalitarian," complained one staffer. "At meetings, you'd be working your ass off and he'd praise the smallest thing that someone else did. Or give a really big project to someone who comes in at 2 PM every day." It quickly emerged, moreover, that Kennedy had little respect for the ins and outs of production schedules—even leaving crucial cover decisions to the last minute on nearly every issue!

Chaos was spreading. "Take the Fiona Apple 'If I Were President' piece," complains the same staffer. "The photo for it was the same photo sent out with her album when it was released a year before. They couldn't even set up a photoshoot." To try to shore up the magazine's literary reputation, insiders say they paid a hefty six-figure sum for the mumblings of Norman Mailer on the conventions. "People from outside the magazine would tell him to run a certain writer," added one staffer. "And he'd get all passionate about it. And then we'd be left to figure it out for him."

All in all, despite initial omens to the contrary, Kennedy was turning out to have far less aptitude for hands-on editing than even his critics had anticipated. "It looked like he was doing largely what everybody else did—he gets in and returns phone calls...he organized the football and soccer games. You got to credit him for that." But did John ever actually *edit*, shepherd a piece along that noble and rocky road from conception to appearance on the page? "I never saw it."

Mad Lieutenants

By the time, in other words, that Mr. Phillipachi showed up, in his yellow French shirt, to inspect the first issue, nobody was quite sure what the magazine was—and Eric Etheridge was already on his way out. One of those gruff Southerners who always seems in a bad mood but nevertheless insists on addressing one as *Sir*, Etheridge went into *George*, according to one insider, "thinking it was his magazine...and it turned out that John wanted to be the boss boss." "He thought John was going to open doors to get them access, and then get out of the way."

This misunderstanding was cleared up in the very first issue, however, after Etheridge—with a "heightened awareness of masthead-type shit," according to one staffer—removed Kennedy's "founder" label from the inaugural *George* masthead. Kennedy found out, had the label restored, and explained to Etheridge in blunt terms how the system would be working from that moment forth. Even if John wasn't going to be actually editing, he was still going to be, you know, in charge.

The relationship was never likely to succeed. Kennedy's interest ran more towards Top 10 Lists and starlets on the cover than to articles that might command the respect of either the journalism or polit-

ical community. Etheridge preferred the more substantial material, like Caleb Carr's essay on "politics as the national pastime," and novelist Mark Leyner's dispatches from the campaign trail. "Eric wanted *George* smarter, he was very highbrow," remembers one staffer. "But John wanted more pop culture. He listened to the focus groups, who said they wanted celebrities."

Eventually, Etheridge was bumped, and Kennedy replaced him with then Senior Editor Elizabeth "Biz" Mitchell. At only 28 years old, Mitchell seemed to appreciate her boss's desire to be seen as something more than a figurehead and had a feel for how to handle him. Agreed one editor: "Eric didn't expect to have to pass story ideas by John. And I think Biz knew she was going to have to. She operated with very different preconceptions." "Biz is very capable, but she knows how far she can go," added another. Kennedy promoted her, adding the diminutive prefix "executive" to the title "editor" before entrusting her with all the difficult, complicated tasks involved with running a magazine.

Whatever his replaceable virtues, Etheridge had at least recognized the true nature of the battle *George* had on its hands: trying to be *about* something. "Eric would always talk about what a 'George story' was," remembers one staffer. "And 'George people.'" In his absence, under Kennedy's largely reactive editing style, that quest was abandoned in favor of increasingly desperate attempts to draw a link between politics on the one hand and something, anything, that people might conceivably care about on the other. To coincide, for instance, with the launch of the Demi Moore vehicle *Striptease*—roundly acknowledged as the world's worst movie—Kennedy's letter in the June/July 1996 *George* started out with some random thoughts on children ("as *George* looked around America, we found that in many communities the future looks threatening") and concluded with an agonized piece of connective thinking in which he ingeniously managed to refer to Moore's character as "a stripper engaged in the world's oldest form of lobbying." The magazine hadn't ever been good, but now it was getting worse.

Berman was next to fall out of favor. At first, Kennedy's associate had seemed content to skulk in the shadows at *George*. He had once remarked, with good humor, that being in partnership with Kennedy was like being "Dolly Parton's feet," hoping perhaps that such conspicuous modesty might lead everyone to assume that behind closed doors, he was secretly calling the shots. If this was his intention, however, staffers were having none of it. "We never talked to Berman ever," said one. "I really have no idea what his job was. 'Mysterious' is giving him too

Sons & Hair JFK Jr. versus *Swing* editor David Lauren

However unique the set of circumstances that led JFK Jr. to launch a vague, high-concept magazine that only survives because he has great hair, he is not alone. Not quite, anyway.



CATEGORY	DAVID LAUREN	JOHN KENNEDY
Famous dad:	Ralph Lauren, né Lipschitz, clothier.	John F. Kennedy, murdered President of the United States.
Editor and founder of magazine:	Yes. <i>Swing</i> .	Yes. <i>George</i> .
High-concept subject matter that still allows for interviews with Cameron Diaz?	Life in your twenties, as lived by Cameron Diaz	Politics for people who didn't know they liked politics, Cameron Diaz presumably.
Circulation:	Publisher refuses to release figures	Publisher refuses to release figures.
Famous hair:	Yes, abundant tossable mane.	Yes, curly explosion, trimmed in adult life.

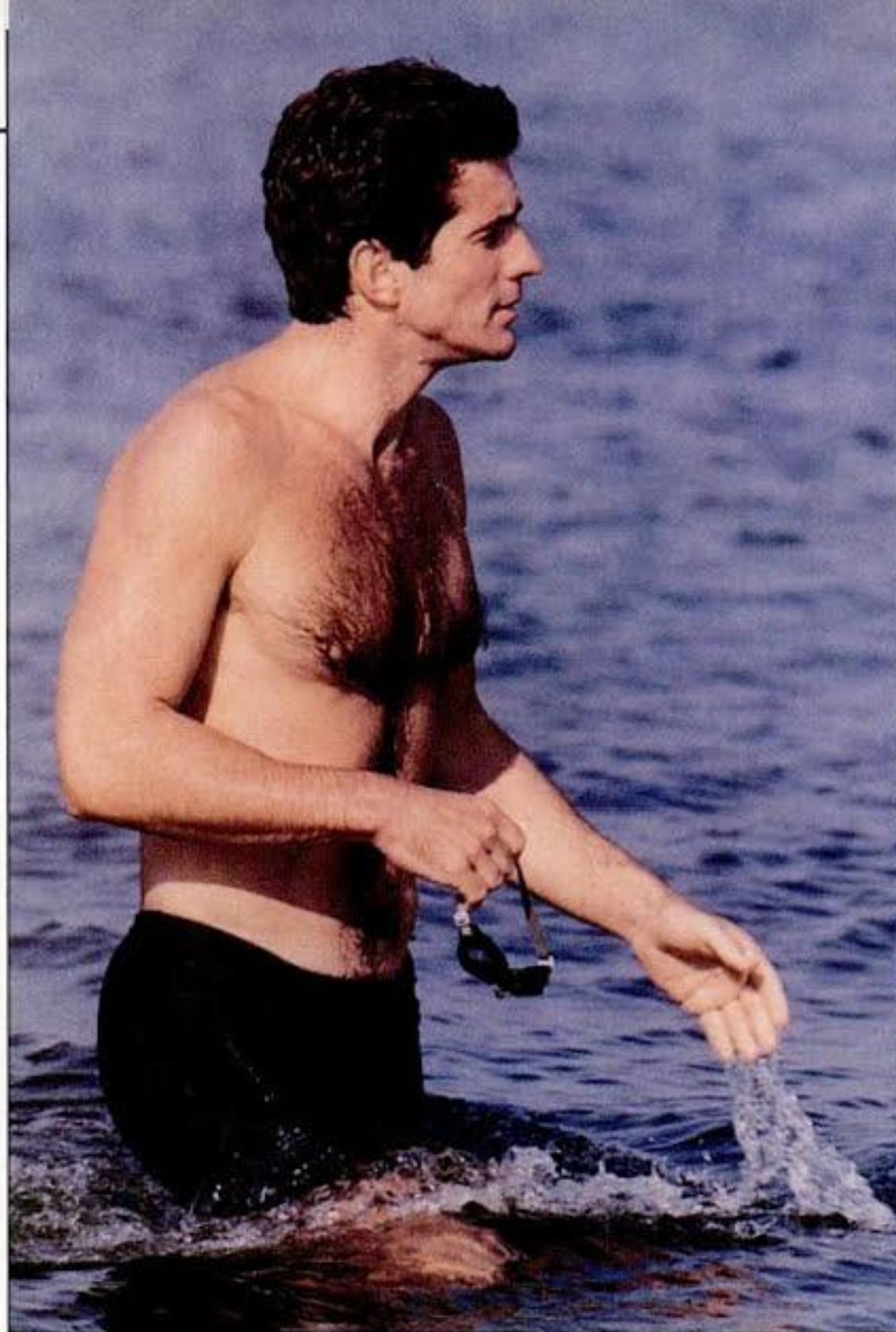
much credit." The only truly mysterious thing about Berman, in fact, seemed to be the question of whether or not he wore a wig. Several staffers interviewed by SPY testified spontaneously to his "full head of hair," while another chipped in that Berman is "famous for his hairpiece." This much is known: a drip of moisture seen inching down his face during one of his TV appearances was widely, and perhaps wildly, speculated in the *George* offices to be some sort of melting adhesive making a desperate bid for freedom from the confines of an airless cap of faux-hair.

At the same time, it was well known that Berman at least loved the *idea* of the spotlight. His wife, Victoria, is an A-list interior decorator, and according to one staffer, Berman was "obsessed by the buzz" surrounding *George* at its launch, seeing the magazine as a chance to become a true New York media insider. He "lived for the *New York Observer*," remembers one employee, and according to another, was "the kind of guy who would see a celebrity's name in the paper, would know who their publicist was, and would chuckle with friends over how it was spun and who leaked it."

As John Kennedy's partner, though, Berman was reminded on a daily basis that one's personal glamour owes more of a debt to nature than to nurture. "He and John would go on TV and John would be great," added one employee. "Speaking slowly, looking down a lot, which you are supposed to do. And Michael would look like an idiot. Which is strange because Michael never looked bad. He always was careful to look good." The staff was generally dismayed at Berman's television personae, "He's usually pretty slick."

In order to offset the Kennedy charisma, one either needed smarts—overmatching Kennedy at his weakest point—or a massive helping of fabulousness all one's own. "[Berman] was no match for John" explained one staffer who often found himself a bystander at many of Berman's lapses. "In any dispute, everyone took John's side." Like Etheridge before him, Berman found his role "getting smaller and smaller," according to one staffer, as Kennedy grew in editorial confidence.

At the same time, Kennedy's much scrutinized relationship with leggy, unsmiling ice-maiden Carolyn Bessette was gathering steam and proving something of a distraction in the offices of *George*. The famous Central Park squabble between the lovebirds—that left Kennedy blubbing alone on the curb—had just aired on a tabloid TV show. To Berman's annoyance, what's more, Bessette would sneak her dog, Friday, past the security guards in order to drop in on friends in the *George* art department, provid-



Is JFK Jr. as Attractive as People Say He Is?

"Clearly the legend of John John's attractiveness has grown literally to comic scale over the last two or three years. There was that *Seinfeld* episode, and endless throw-away beginnings to women's magazine articles that play on John John's "hunkiness" much the same way that stand-up comics fixate on the wobbly wheels of supermarket trolleys. But there's no smoke without fire. The guy has that rare femininity-within-generic-ruggedness thing going on. He's like the male Deborah Norville."

—Marcella Dixon, feminist and iconologist

ing yet more incentive for the staff of Hachette's other publications to come traipsing wide-eyed through *George* with disposable cameras.

The oddly public confrontations between Kennedy and Berman began to escalate until eventually, in an attempt to keep things from getting out of hand, Kennedy relocated the *George* office, moving most of the editorial staff into *Premiere*'s area near *Road and Track*, but leaving Berman and the rest of the publisher's staff where they were. But it didn't help. After one incident in which Berman tried to force his way into Kennedy's office, sparking a scuffle in which Kennedy's custom-made dress shirt was ripped, he was given new duties at the parent company and was shipped out of the building.

Berman's name was dropped to the bottom of the masthead as "co-founder" and the staff members were warned to not talk to him if they saw him in the halls. "They said it was 'not just politics as usual,'" commented one employee, referring to one of the magazine's myriad mission statements. But behind closed doors, or even open ones, "it was *all* politics."

Running on Fumes

Something would go right occasionally. *George*'s most successful article by far, for example, in the unanimous opinion of the staff, was September 96's photo-driven spread on "Women of the GOP". One editor described it to SPY as "the perfect story. [The women] were psyched to dress up in Prada shoes. You can't do that with democratic consultants. You certainly can't do it with Earth First! activists. That was a great *George* story." The

creative success of the article, however, only drew attention to a massive, steaming problem. In the words of the same editor, "once you've done that, what can you do?"

Before long, the editorial offices of *George* became entirely suffused by this sensation: the slightly surreal feeling, anathema to just about any form of creativity, that every time one has a good idea, one can *never have it again*, that one is *running out*. Politics overlapped with Pop Culture in such a limited number of ways that the more successful and "Georgeish" an article, the more it hammered home to the staff that thinking of an equally good story for the next issue was going to be that much harder.

George's covers were a perfect example. The first issue famously featured Cindy Crawford as George Washington; on the second cover it was *Charles Barkley* as George Washington. And then... who? To keep some semblance of the tradition alive, *George* was forced to go snuffling in the tiny inflatable backyard pool of American political history: Julia Roberts as Susan B. Anthony, Barbara Streisand as that bonnet-wearing woman who sewed the first flag. Eventually, in a move that a precocious child could have predicted from the very first issue, Kennedy was forced to drop his brainchild of a cover concept and resort to another, slightly more familiar tactic: having attractive Hollywood celebrities pose as attractive Hollywood celebrities, with a splash of spangled red, white, and blue lobbed cynically into the picture as a "political" tie-in.

Possibly worse than the covers, in the degree to which they revealed the unworkability of the magazine's central idea, were its departments: the regular sections within each issue of *George*. Rather than introducing new magazine formats inspired by its daringly fresh subject matter, *George* had relied on shoddily executed clone-versions of the same cheesy sections every other celebrity magazine had been using for decades, only this time with cute political sounding names. The de rigueur opening round-up of news snippets, for instance—which tends to be called "Upfront" or "Appetizers" in generically bad magazines—was in *George* titled "Primaries." Reader mail was to be found under "Yeas and Nays," and an abysmal party pics section bore the effortless, embarrassing tag, "We the People."

"What finally happened," according to one staffer, "was that they ceased trying to define what *George* was and just focused on getting the fucking

magazine out," scrambling for celebrities "with tits" as often as possible to put on the cover and then trying to figure out what that person had to do with politics. After a while, the truth became inescapable: *George* was running out of subject matter.

So after a year of magazine editing, where exactly was John F. Kennedy Jr.? At the end of yet another youthful entrepreneurial folly that was flawed at its very core? Or a tough-minded visionary, in the midst of the sort of adversarial period that would sound great in the telling ten years hence once *George* was a storming success?

By all accounts, he had no clue. Or, to be more exact, he had one clue.

Chesthair Prostitute

Just as the unmanned conceptual underpinnings of his magazine were beginning to rattle loose and his staff was starting to really *notice* the griminess of their cubicles, the first batch of subscriber surveys—questionnaires sent out to readers to garner feedback—started arriving back at the offices of Hachette. One staffer remembers the moment: "it turned out that nobody consistently read anything in the magazine except the editor's letter and John's monthly interview, each of which were read by 80-90 percent of the readers." These were "unheard of numbers," as one editor put it. "He could interview his mailman and people would read it," marveled another.

Hachette could hardly have been surprised. They had, after all, been marketing the magazine as if it were John Kennedy's personality-driven zine from the very start, using Kennedy himself, for instance, as a globetrotting ad salesman from the very beginning. "He would go to Detroit to sell ads and give speeches, and fly all over to promote to people who would buy ads...I don't think that editors generally spend a lot of time selling ads, but I think [Kennedy] does," confirmed one former insider.

The company also had few qualms about trampling on the magazine's editorial content, as one former intern remembers. "We're having a staff meeting, which is supposed to be about editorial, and Eleanor Carmody-Gibbons [Hachette's advertising director] comes in and says, 'Okay guys, now we're going to be *Vanity Fair*, because that's what the advertisers want.' She then proceeds to offer up specific story ideas we are going to have to do, and I'm thinking, 'Is this normal?'" For Hachette, it seemed, *George's* editorial content was little more than protective padding in which the real money-spinner—the high-



The Elder Statesman

Finally a man, Kennedy revisits his childhood playground a world of secret panels behind which a guy can just, you know, pee.

end Ken doll whose dad had been president—could nestle and look well-rounded. But it wasn't working. Readership was dwindling—even to this day *George*'s circulation figures aren't audited (a standard accounting practice in the publishing industry designed to help advertisers get value for money)—as was the number of ads in every issue.

Summer 1997, three years after he and a friend had come up with one of the nuttier ideas in the history of entrepreneurship, John F. Kennedy Jr. was faced with a difficult choice: give up or sell out. "All you have to do is point to that letter from the editor where he's naked," opined one editor. "There's your answer."

Nude Fun

September 1997 and John is posing clothless in the pages of *George*, staring up at an apple for some reason, and referencing yet more of the Kennedy mystique—the interesting part, some might say—as he lambasts his cousins as "poster boys for bad behavior." Cartilaginous supermodel Kate Moss is on the front cover, also nude, creeping through a murky mock-up of the Garden of Eden.

Somewhere on the cover, according to a note inside, you can make out the face of George Washington if you look hard enough. He is veiled in shadow, like a jilted ex-girlfriend staring unhinged through one's kitchen window at night. The media make hay with the "poster boy" quote for a while, and then they move on. Perhaps, in idle moments, some of them start preparing obituaries for the formerly slightly-further-from-its-natural-extinction magazine, as stories circulate among New York media types that Hachette is planning to pull the plug.

From a publishing point of view, *George* magazine has one chance of survival: become a magazine about John Kennedy. If *George* survives, it will be because Kennedy scoured his conscience and determined he is ready to take his place on the newsstand next to *Body by Jake*, *Jane*, *Martha Stewart Living* and any other magazine that markets itself as a direct line into someone's personality. The enormity of the shift should not be underestimated. For someone whose status as a personality has always been noble and passive, lived through telephoto lenses rather than behind podia, the challenge of flogging himself sufficiently that *George* doesn't go under is roughly equivalent to that the late Princess Diana would have faced should she have chosen to start her own cable-access porn show.

Politics just isn't sexy enough. As one staffer summed it up, "Look, when you really actually try to write stories about connections between Hollywood and Washington, it gets pretty pa-

thetic and thin...You get Jenny McCarthy on the cover with her tongue painted red white and blue and nothing more to say politically than she'd model herself as president on the Dalai Lama and invite Pink Floyd to sleep in the Lincoln Bedroom."

If the *George* project from the beginning, then, was an attempt by John F. Kennedy Jr. to prove his intelligence to the world, it was surely a failure. At the party to celebrate the second anniversary of *George*, held at Cuba de Asia, Keith McNally's new Manhattan restaurant, for example, the media had a rare chance to descend on the editor of *George* and pick his brains on world issues and the future of his publication. But all they wanted to know was if his new wife Carolyn was pregnant. And she wasn't.

The question is whether *seeming smart* was really what *George* was about for Kennedy. Why would anyone go to so much trouble—years of work, millions of dollars (admittedly, somebody else's)—to try and prove a relationship between politics and sexiness that patently does not exist? There could hardly be anything less sexy than politics in the 1990s. The speeches are empty and largely for show. The battlelines between left and right have all but vanished. The real power these days belongs to the compromisers and the clause-inserters. Only the psychos are willing to lose their cool over anything.

Why, against this backdrop of bland apparatchik noodling, would Kennedy make a fool of himself sticking up for the blatantly out-of-date idea that people think politics is sexy? Why? Because the more disastrously it fails,



EDITOR'S

LETTER

DON'T SIT UNDER THE APPLE TREE

(WOMEN) ARE STRONGER AND SMARTER AND THEY DON'T PLAY FAIR —JACK NICHOLSON ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

I've learned a lot about temptation recently. But that doesn't make me desire any less. If anything, to be reminded of the possible perils of succumbing to what's forbidden only makes it more alluring. But while I'm playing Hamlet with my willpower (Should I or shouldn't I?), there's always the distraction of gawking at the travails of those who simply couldn't resist. We can all gather, like urchins at a hanging, to watch those poor souls who took a chance on fantasy and came up empty-handed—to remind ourselves to keep to the safety of the middle path. An article I just read gave a name to the kind of temptation I'm talking about. It's not a striking body or a pile of money or a new toy, but something more intangible. It's the inevitable by-product of living a respectable

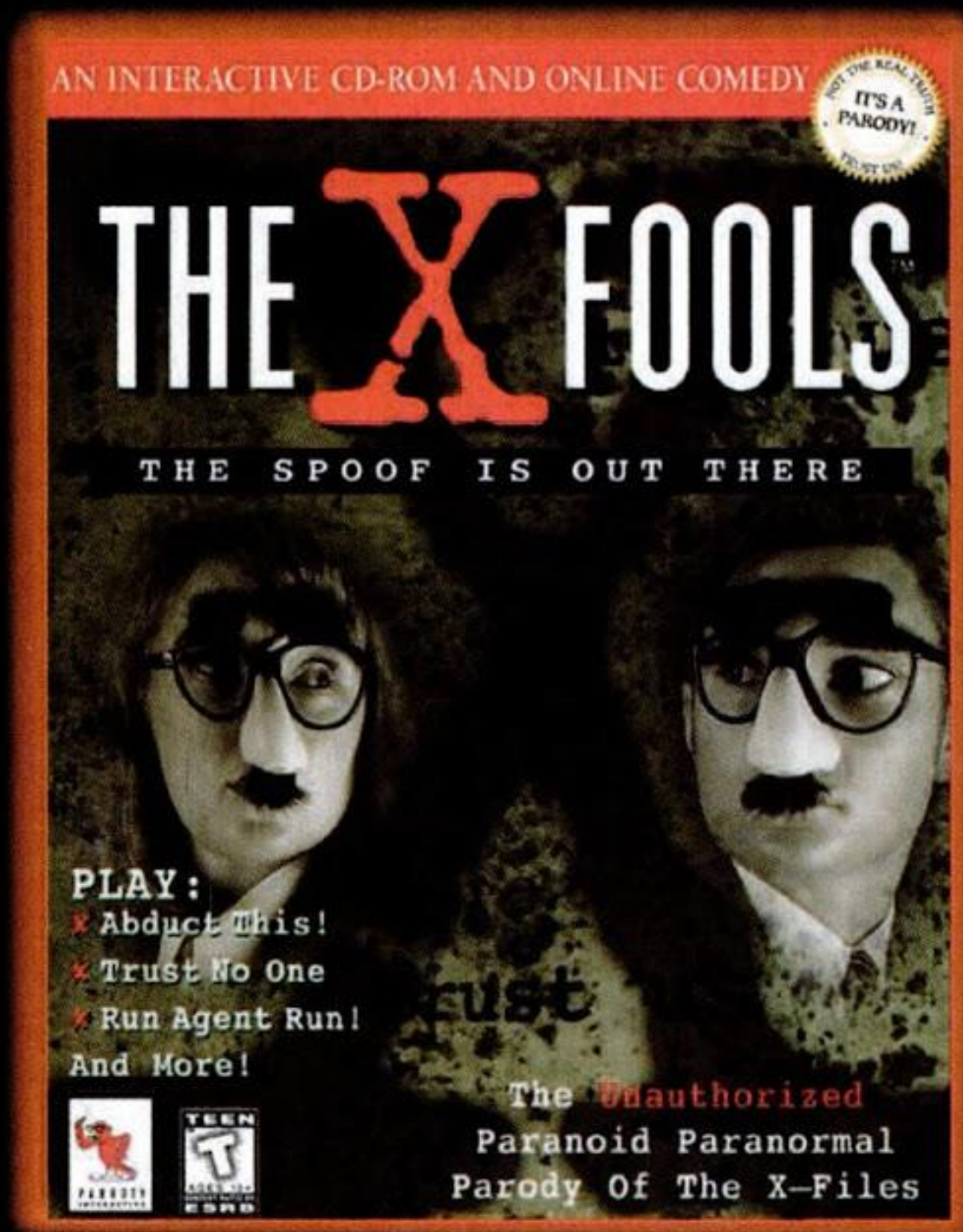
Strange Fruit

Kennedy reliving Adam's dilemma: wait for the apple, or stand up and get it and risk Eve, you know, seeing my "area"?

the better. Because in four year's time when he runs for president he will no longer have to answer the question "What does this man know about politics apart from that it killed his dad?" He will be the man that used to edit

George, the man who heroically put his pride on the line to make politics matter again. The public will blame itself for *George*'s failure, for having voted in a crop of bland politicians, and they will be ready to make amends. In the year 2000, the only aspect of "politics" that "people who *don't like* politics" will have any knowledge of will be the phrase "John F. Kennedy"—just like thirty years ago—and they're going to yank on that lever like it was the paddle of a hand-made, yet mass-produced, kayak.

ABDUCT THIS!



What's so funny about alien autopsies and government conspiracies? Nothing until now.

Introducing *The X-Fools*, the paranoid paranormal, parody of *The X-File*.™

Access your FREE demo at:

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COCCO

Queen Charles

The Inner Radiance and Outer Dignity of an NBA Superstar

Exclusive: Downsizing Your Wardrobe

Martha Stewart, Colossus of Class

Nineteen Scent-ury Eaux de Toilette: We've Ranked Them

Not Just Classy Femininity as Usual

Plus

The Liberace Legacy: Too Much, But In a Weird Way, Never Enough

Hostess of the month

Plus Twenty Top Decorators of the Modern Age



SCENT OF A WOMAN

When we hear the phrase "lavender water", of what do we think? A generation ago, my mother and her friends would have tittered at its mention. The colorless fluid (with an odor straight from the days of the *ancien régime*) was a non-specific deodorant, of the sort a lady might carry in her purse and pray to God she'd never have to use.

Today, however, thanks to master chefs like Jean-Georges Vongerichten, the delicate, vaguely purple essence is making a comeback as an ingredient in some of the most perfect of modern *hors d'oeuvres*.

Which is why I started *Coco* in the first place. Because changes like this are happening every day. As I look around me, thousands of young Americans, of every gender and body type, are becoming aware that who they are deep down is a dignified, still-beautiful older woman, whose idea of a perfect evening is to entertain a select group of friends with memorable nibbles. Or perhaps to find a lovely piece of decrepit old furniture in a charming antique store and make it wonderful again. Or perhaps be passively wooed by a number of billionaire Greek shipping magnates.

Why *Coco*? Because nobody except my mother embodied feminine dignity like Coco Chanel, and one should always be on first name terms with one's radiant dowagers. Don't you think?

John Kennedy

COCO

FEATURES
FEBRUARY 1998

80 WINDOW ON THE SOUL

By Norman Mailer

A history of that quiet, beatific little smile we all strive for. The one that bespeaks perfect inner serenity.

80 THE PERPLEXING MR. QUENTIN TARANTINO

By Salman Rushdie

The well-spoken film director explains why his characters often seem to deliberately *not* radiate a quiet dignity.

51 TROUBLE IN A CHINA SHOP?

By Jay McInerney

What effect will the recent frenzy over antique Wedgewood cups and

bowls have on the expensive flatware industry as a whole?

DEPARTMENTS

2 PRENUPS

Photographs by Various

A serious-minded but ladylike look at some of the world events that the men have been reading about in the newspaper recently.

6 ACCESSORIES

By Ruth Shalit

Elegant gadgets you may want to adorably wrinkle your nose at, expressing your affinity with the values of an older, gentler time.

198 MY FAVORITE NIBBLE

By Keith Richards

The elegantly aging guitar player shares details of how to make his patented beef and scallion roll. And its plum-based dipping sauce.

256 LAST WILL & TESTAMENT

By John Wayne Bobbitt

On this month's backpage, the brave cinema personality tells the story of some charming old wallpaper he found in a musty house tucked deep in the Adirondacks, had steamed off, and then paid a firm to repaste on the walls of his office.



COVER: This month, Charles Barkley is wearing Chanel's Crystalle behind his left ear.

PRENUPS

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE
FASHION AND PARTY TRENCHES

BY LARRY INSBERG

A GOOD SPORT, AND HANDSOME

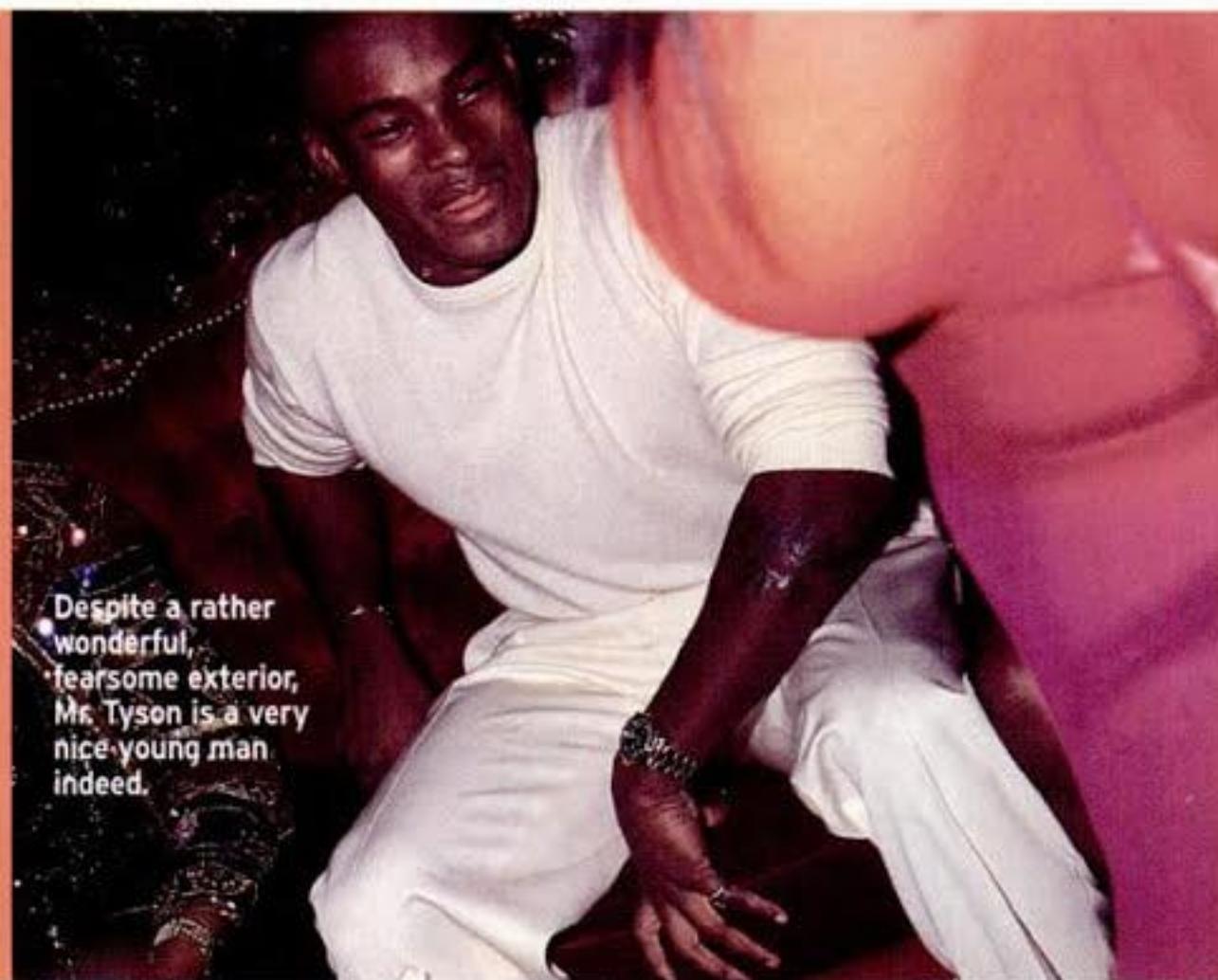
Irrelevant
distrac-
tions
abound
when
you're Mr.
Richard
Branson!



The wonderful thing about this picture (left) is that the fellow on the right is not in fact the character Austin Powers from a very well received motion picture last year, but the financial world's highly successful **MR. RICHARD BRANSON**. By all accounts, Mr. Branson has worked hard all his life and done exceedingly well for himself. He is the

founder and spokesperson of a huge air travel and recorded music empire with a name that's far too daring and off-color to be repeated here, but nevertheless he is widely reported to be a gentleman of extraordinary charm. As for the liveliness and fun he can bring to a function, well, we think this picture rather speaks for itself.

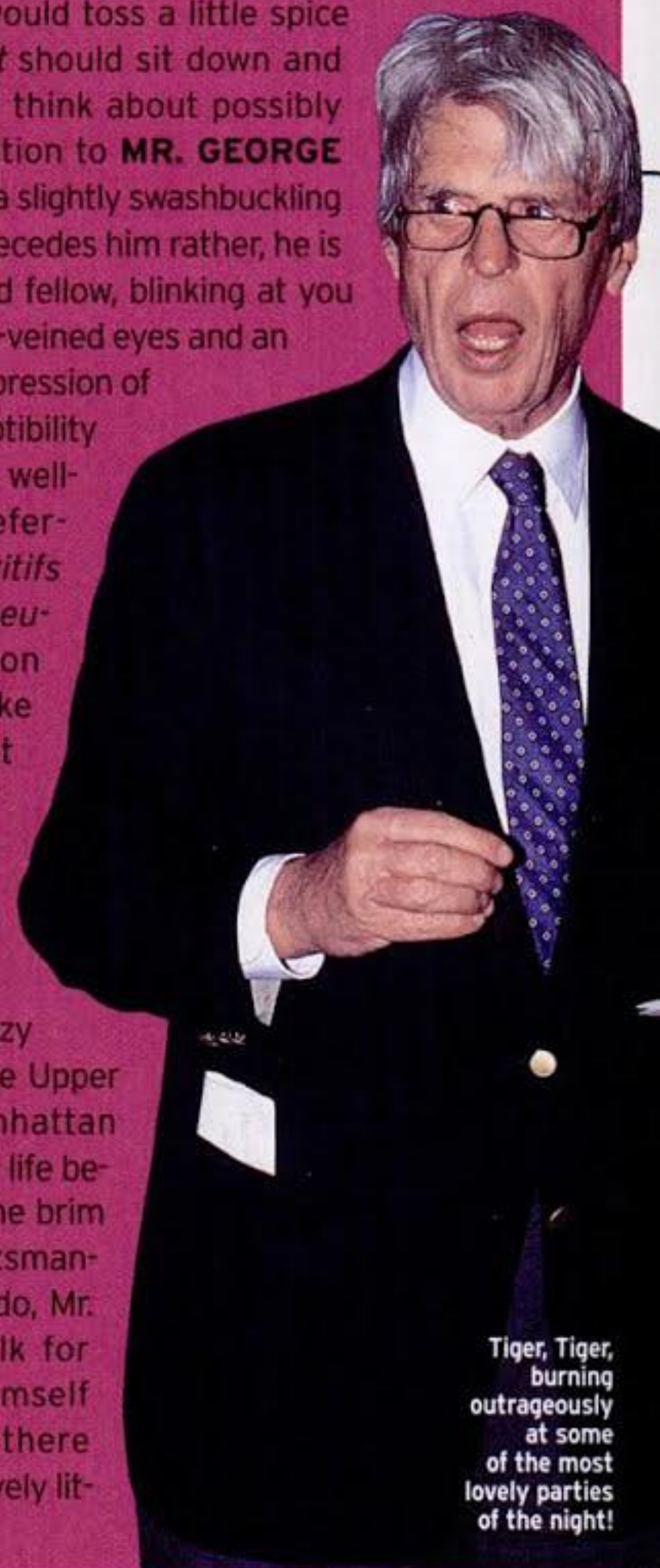
The *Coco* Department of Marital Status Research has unearthed a serious attachment *vis-à-vis* Mr. Branson's private life. But we can imagine that at some point he has been, like other desirable men, susceptible to the half-smile, the tucking of a strand of hair behind the ear, and the fingering of pearls. On a rather sad note, however, it must be noted with great sympathy that Mr. Branson was a friend of the late and wonderful Princess Diana, and was most upset by her demise.



Despite a rather
wonderful,
fearsome exterior,
Mr. Tyson is a very
nice young man
indeed.

DO FEED THE ANIMAL!

Those who would toss a little spice into *le placement* should sit down and have a long hard think about possibly sending an invitation to **MR. GEORGE PLIMPTON**. With a slightly swashbuckling reputation that precedes him rather, he is an all-around good fellow, blinking at you with pale blue, red-veined eyes and an open-mouthed expression of permanent susceptibility to delight. With a well-documented preference for *les apéritifs* over *les hors d'oeuvres*, Mr. Plimpton will gladly make himself available at every party there is, and is all too delighted to throw the rest of them himself, often at his bright and breezy town house on the Upper East Side of Manhattan Island. With a long life behind him, full to the brim with acts of sportsmanship and derring-do, Mr. Plimpton can talk for hours about himself while you stand there adorably with a lovely little smile!



Tiger, Tiger,
burning
outrageously
at some
of the most
lovely parties
of the night!

GUESS WHO'S WELCOME TO COME TO DINNER!

Very occasionally, the most exquisite treasures are to be found in unexpected places. A case in point is a young man, recently drawn to *Coco's* attention, by the unusually short name of **MR. TYSON**. Although reports of Mr. Tyson's conversational predilections were not forthcoming at the time of *Coco's* going to press, we were given a very nicely bound book of photographs in which he appears on almost every page. It is not exactly clear what it is Mr. Tyson engages in by way of employment, but the consensus in the office is that it must be some sort of strenuous athletics.

A talk with
Charles Barkley about
the pressures of basketball and
of being the perfect hostess.
An interview
by John Kennedy

A ROUND MOUND OF CLASS AND STYLE

Charles Barkley of the Houston Rockets is not the first name that comes to mind when one considers the graceful arts of entertaining and being feminine. More of a dunker than a hostess, more of a ref-bumping muthafucka than a wearer of a simple strand of pearls, Charles has made a career out of appearing to be on the verge of a psychopathic breakdown. To sit down with him and discover his inner powder puff was a lifelong dream come true.

John Kennedy: What's it like being a black man in America?

Charles Barkley: I can't answer that question.

JFK: Why not?

CB: That's like asking a woman plagued by impetigo or one of the other facial skin diseases what it's like being her. I'm black every day. I wake up black. I go to sleep black. And every moment in between is a crazy juggling act of pancake and blush, constantly adjusting the makeup advice I get in magazines, like this one, to allow for my race. I'm not just a minority, like an Italian or a Serb, I'm a minority with a different skin tone than white people. You get used to it. And at the same time you don't get used to it.

JFK: It's a frustration for you.

CB: Yeah.

JFK: Do you ever come close to losing your aura of classy tranquility?

CB: No. You can't do that. You can't let that happen. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. If you look back at the ones who have been truly great in this business—Gloria Vanderbilt, [Martha] Stewart, Eleanor Roosevelt, your mother of course, Hill Pitman—what you see are women whose serenity and personal style we only

remember *because* there was so much adversity in their lives.

JFK: Absolutely.

CB: Say if I'm hosting an affair, and somebody says something like "Charles, what awesome mascara!" and in fact I'm not wearing mascara, it's just my natural eyelash texture, the absolutely *last* thing I'm going to do is lose my tiny gentle smile, or not offer to take their coat. You just have to keep going...to keep pushing through.

JFK: Why do we not see more costume jewelry in the NBA?

CB: The players will tell you it's a safety thing, that the last thing you want around

your neck when you're trying to throw one down over Dikembe Mutombo or Greg Ostertag is a string of synthetic, Oscar de la Renta pearls. But that's baloney. The truth is that a lot of guys in the NBA feel very strongly that their uniforms are already way too busy and loud. They feel they're already accessorized way too much just with the colors and shapes on the uniforms. You know what I'm saying?

JFK: Do you believe the alarmists who say that there is an epidemic of young people not having sex in the missionary position?

CB: I've seen it for myself.

JFK: You have?

CB: In Alabama, where I grew up, just about every kid I knew would take sex as an opportunity to literally go "buck wild" and throw their gentleness and quiet radiance out the window. It was only myself and a few well-bred friends of mine who really believed that intercourse is an unpleasant means of procreation that should be endured with minimum fuss.

JFK: This is all something of a revelation. To see you on the court, ranting, dunking, and being generally wild, no-one would think you had an interest in makeup and hostessing, in being very well bred, and in having a dignified little smile.

CB: That's very perceptive, John. In fact it's true. I have no interest whatsoever in any of the things I've been talking about.

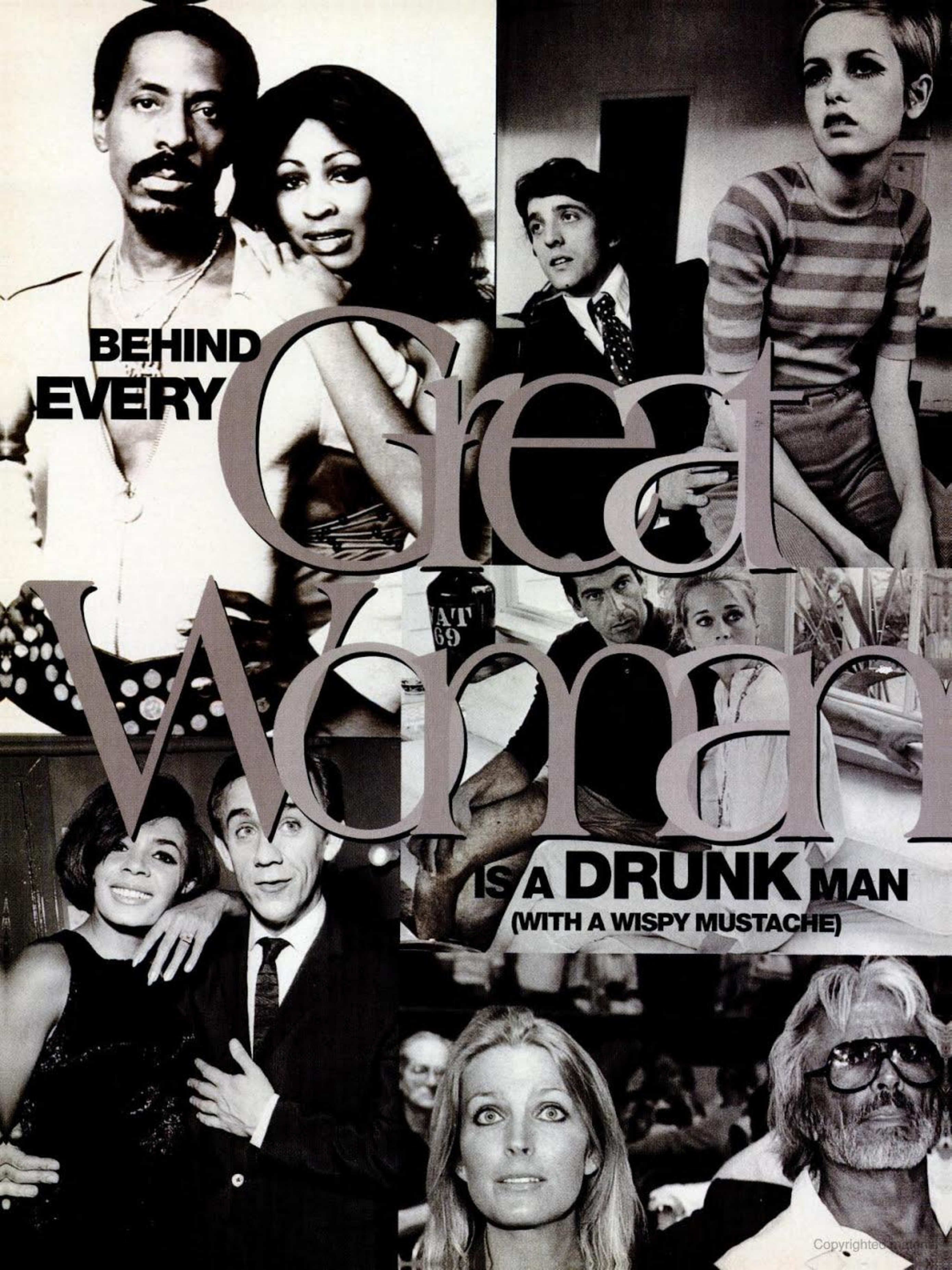
JFK: Right.

CB: I just wanted to meet you.

JFK: Oh.

CB: We don't have a problem do we?

JFK: No. This is how these interviews work, really.



**BEHIND
EVERY**

Great Woman

IS A DRUNK MAN
(WITH A WISPY MUSTACHE)



MOTION IS WEIRD.

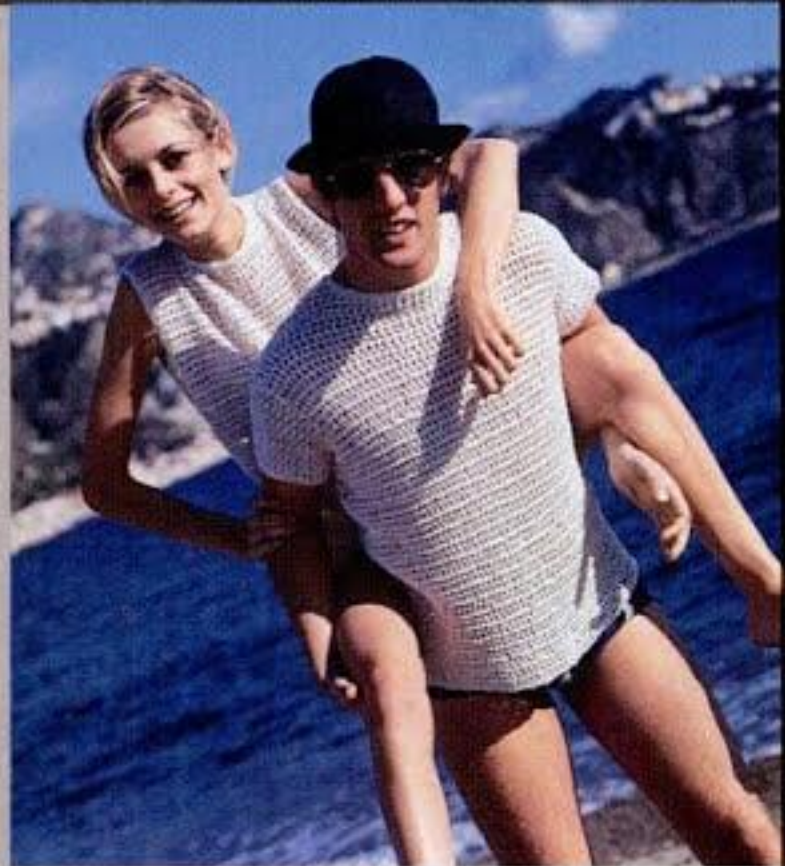
How do you feel, for instance, when Islamic mullahs, especially the insulting Iranian ones with diabolical beards and tube hats, call America "the Great Satan" and refer to our women as "sex slaves?" Probably not very nice. It wouldn't make anybody feel very nice. At whom in the West does a Muslim fundamentalist, so suffused by fear of women that he rides around with a Kalashnikov, looking to empty a banana clip at fans of bare-ankled Indian musicals, think he is hurling insults? What does he mean, anyway? What does he see when he looks at us? He sees our compromised sexual power structures, our "entertainment" industry staffed by millions of bikini-dwelling babes. But—and here's what he won't tell you—it isn't the women he feels sorry for. It's their 120 million used-up manager-boyfriends with wispy mustaches, failing to get past a velvet rope on Oscar night.

No mullah wants to be one of those. They've all seen *Coal Miner's Daughter*, and other films like that, in which the woman, let for a minute out of purdah, becomes famous and powerful, and the manager-boyfriend, an empty husk, is left to a career of getting drunk and smashing things, and being wrestled to the floor when he impotently attempts to twiddle a knob on a recording console. They see that it's the females who have the credit cards, and fame, and are in a steamed-up car with a minor film star while the manager-boyfriend, a cuckold to fame, is prevented from entering Balthazar and wanders drunkenly in the street, realizing that the manageree has cancelled his cellphone account. It's the nightmare of the tube-hatted mullah. This is why we are called the Great Shaitan.

To truly comprehend the agony of the manager-boyfriend, the agony that makes the mullahs shudder, take bone-chilling hatred felt by the man whose wife makes more money than he does and multiply it by the apocalyptic embarrassment of that dream where you're having your rectum examined on national television. Or is it really this bad? Perhaps the image of the manager-boyfriend as an impotent fart-catcher and discarded trailer-home tyrant is a cliché. Can it really be that bad to be one of the well-heeled, vaguely familiar, and not *always* dumped men behind Joan Rivers, Dorothy Stratten, Mariah Carey, Fran Drescher, Victoria Sellers, Tina Turner, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, Vanna White, Jenny Lind, Marilyn Monroe, Congresswoman Carol Mosley-Braun, Helen Reddy, Rita Mitchell, Shirley Bassey, Linda Lovelace, Anita Bryant, Reba McEntire, Suzanne Muzzi, Celine Dion, Cyndi Lauper, La Toya Jackson, Koko Taylor, Twiggy, Vanessa Williams, marathon cheat Nadezha Ilynia, and literature's Virginia Woolf? Can it really be that bad being a manager-boyfriend? And if it can, why would anyone want to be one?

Well, money, for one thing. If your girlfriend becomes successful and makes lots of money, you automatically get some of it. You become, if everything goes well, a Svengali. The word comes, unsurprisingly, from "Svengali," which is the name of the sinister musical hypnotist and ur-manager-boyfriend of George du Maurier's novel *Trilby*. Svengali uses hypnosis to turn a tone-deaf artist's model named Trilby O'Farrell into the toast of

There are
WORSE ways
to spend your time
THAN as the
increasingly
useless manager-
BOY friend
of a rising starlet.
You could be a
CARROT in a
vegetarian
restaurant, or a
DOG, trapped
inside a
locked car on a
HOT
summer day.



TOP: Yesteryear's Cyndi Lauper, and husband-manager Dave Wolf.
MIDDLE: Tina Turner and Ike, in between spectacular beatings.
BOTTOM: Twiggy and Nigel "Justin de Villeneuve" Davies.

Europe. It is a situation which is very lucrative for himself. He wears great furs, and rides in hansom cabs around Paris, smoking enormous cigars. His profitable career as, well, a svengali, is only interrupted by a coronary arrest while conducting his hypnotized ward from an opera box. Trilby, her "conductor" departed, comes to her senses and can do nothing but sing a drinking song off key to howls of laughter.

There are real Svengalis though, successful ones that make the whole thing look deceptively easy. Jenny McCarthy's manager-boyfriend, Ray Manzella, is living proof that manager-boyfriending can work, if one takes ordinary business precautions, like simple diversification. It may be possible to go unreplaced as a manager-boyfriend, if one, according to the Manzella model, takes the precaution of dealing in multiple replaceable blondes. A former infomercial king, Manzella may be the Uncontested Boyfriend-Manager of the modern age, having sequentially handled, if only commercially, Vanna White, Pamela Anderson, and now his cosmic gift of a girlfriend, Jenny McCarthy, 24, the breast-augmented and armpit-sniffing former *Playboy* model and MTV favorite who now has an NBC sitcom.

Ironically, in her *Playboy* spread, Jenny listed her "turnoff" as "guys who give you their business cards and say, 'Call me, babe, I can make you a star.'" Yet her boyfriend-manager is a person who does that for a living, and seems to have a good time doing it. Sources say that McCarthy has tried several times to break up with Manzella, who is pushing fifty, "but his Svengali effect over her always keeps her coming back." And Manzella makes himself useful. Certainly, McCarthy utilizes Manzella. She doesn't carry a handbag, for instance. She keeps Manzella along with her instead, filling his pockets with lipsticks. To the casual eye, though, it isn't immediately clear why she would consort with a man who resembles a mangled Ted Danson.

The answer may be, partially, his client's lack of discrimination: Jenny, a former hair-spray "addict," regularly consults psychics, eats Crunchberries, and visits Indian sweat lodges. It is possible that she will believe anything. If Ray gets chunked, he has taken precautions that would allow him to hit the ground running. After all, Manzella Personal Management had a Beverly Hills address before it had Jenny McCarthy. Jenny McCarthy, after all, was the new Pamela Anderson; and Manzella is in a prime situation to be the man who comes up with the new Jenny McCarthy—as indistinguishable from her stablemates as the ab-crunchers which he sold in his earlier days were from each other. It's not impossible that in the autumn of his years, Ray Manzella will be teaching Manager-Boyfriend 457 at Wharton. It's possible, in other words, that with a little foresight, Manzella has made it work.

Models, by the way, have more interfering manager-boyfriends than most. Typically, the more the woman's business is selling herself as a piece of meat, the more personal management she would seem to need. The supermodel Twiggy's manager-boyfriend in the sixties was a sharp named Nigel Davies who changed his name, for business purposes, to Justin de Villeneuve—reminding one of the maxim that one should only trust people who discard French names, not those who acquire them. Davies cheated on Twig and spent her money—arguably his well-earned manager's fees—on Rolls Royces, Aston Martins, and other women. To his credit, according to Twiggy, he steered the mascaraed waif clear of the orgies and drugs that were waiting to claim her—and which, conceivably, she might have enjoyed. At any rate, they were successful together, and we certainly would not have Twiggy to the credit of the civilization, were it not for Nigel Davies.

But despite the occasional, freakish success story, svengali-ing doesn't usually work. The nature of the entertainment business is such that once a woman becomes successful enough, there are any number of better equipped replacements waiting for the manager-boyfriend to be put out to pasture. Having "made it" (the calendar, the jigsaw puzzle, the part on *Wings*), the average starlet often wishes to cut loose—like a rocket jettisoning its fuel tank—from the boyfriend-manager, who usually has poor table manners and a vulgar mustache, and won't let her "find herself"—or worse, *might appear responsible for her success*.

THE SADDEST SPICE OF THEM ALL



imon "Svengali Spice" Fuller, whom the Spice Girls dumped a few weeks ago after he had taken them to superstardom, is a good example of this. The supposed one-time bedmate of Emma "Baby Spice"

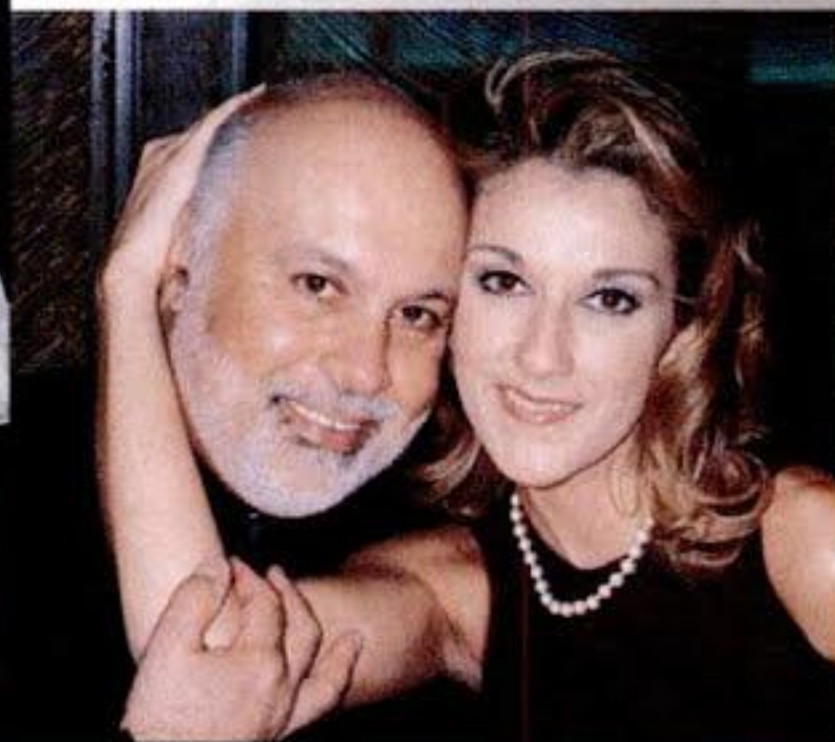
Bunton (she firmly denies it), Fuller obtained the intensely marketable song-and-dance group from the manager who actually formed it, and managed to net its foolish and arbitrary members over \$50 million. A sensible businessman, Fuller may have

thought himself left in the position of being the only long-lasting thing about the Spice Girls phenomenon, taking great care that his wards (despite the dolls, the Scary Spice frozen pizza) were as disposable as tissue. He was wrong.

Fuller must have figured that there would be no Diana Ross Spice rising up to haunt Simon Fuller's Berry Gordy. Like any good Svengali—meaning like Ray Manzella—he had previously managed another woman, Annie Lennox, so he theoretically knew what he was dealing with. But Fuller still got fired and today can be imagined drinking in a room somewhere, unable to get a restaurant table with his previous ease, no one believing it was his genius, rather than that of the girls, that conjured about \$50 million dollars out of thin air.

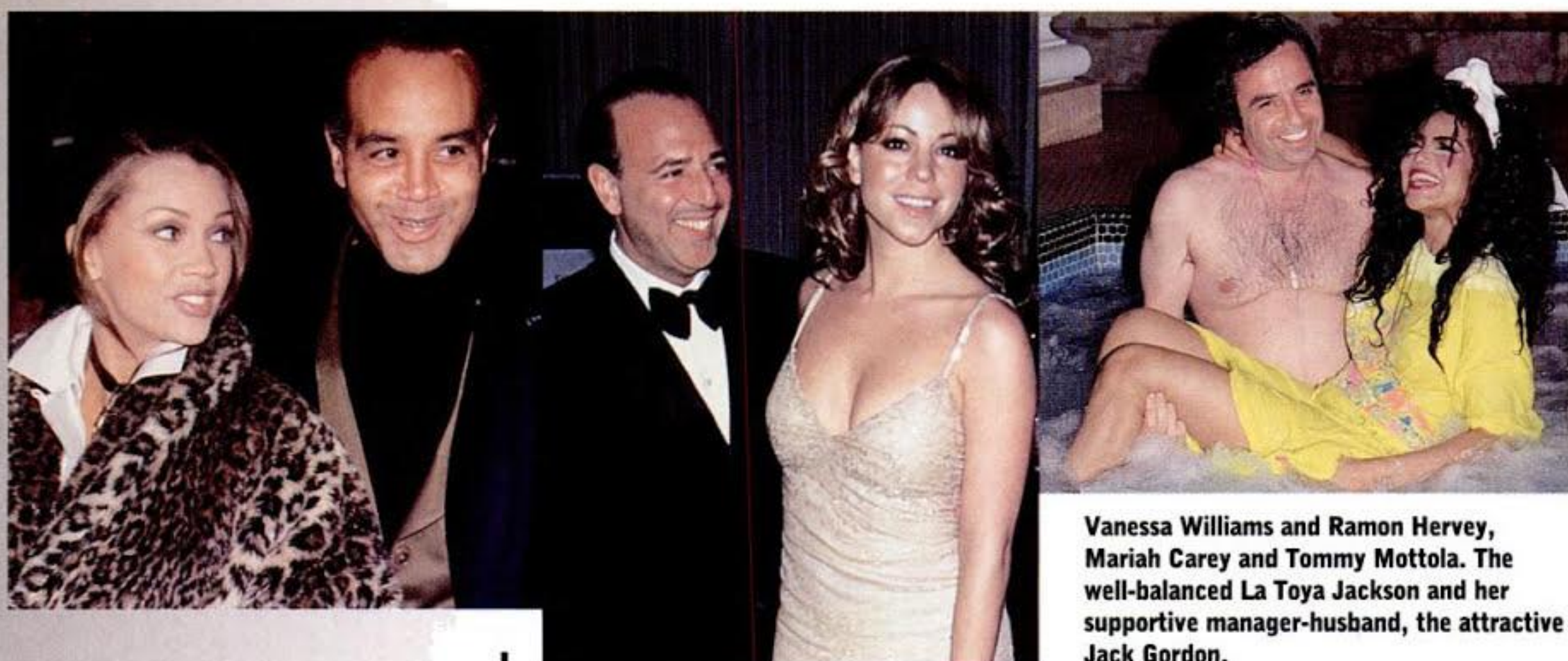
Sometimes, though, manager-boyfriends are after something more than just money from the arrangement. Sometimes he wants to be famous in his own right—and even has all the skills to be so—but through a combination of dreadful circumstances, he goes down in history as a manager-boyfriend. The manager-boyfriend who does have something to recommend himself as an artist may lose his reputation for artistry, owing to having done a bit of manager-boyfriending on the side.

Ike Turner, cinema's Number One manager-boyfriend, has a reputation today not grander than that of a talentless, resource-free trailer-park inhabitant whose wife, a genius, barely escaped with her life. This is provocative. Ike was a seminal R&B man *and* a celebrity when he first met Tina and made the mistake of doing some management while he had cocaine stuck all over his face. He was also a legendary A&R man who (forget Tina Turner) discovered *Howlin' Wolf* and *Elmore James*. Without Ike, pop music might be substantially different. Without Tina Turner, we must observe, it would be substantially the same. Yet none of this signifies: Tina is all. Ted Hughes, the Ike Turner of English poetry, probably refuses to let a copy of *What's Love Got to Do With It* enter his house, out of solidarity.



LEFT: Fran Drescher and Peter Jacobson.
MIDDLE: "I am strong. I am invincible. I have a husband-manager." Helen Reddy and Jeff Wald.
RIGHT: Celine Dion and superannuated Canuck Svengali Rene Angelil.

The first
INSTINCT of
the manager-
BOYfriend is
to cause
PROBLEMS,
commit sexual
assault, and
GRAB the
world's attention
with his crazy
FACIAL hair.



Vanessa Williams and Ramon Hervey, Mariah Carey and Tommy Mottola. The well-balanced La Toya Jackson and her supportive manager-husband, the attractive Jack Gordon.

TWIGGY'S
manager
BOYfriend Justin
de Villeneuve
REMINDS
one of the maxim
that one should
only **TRUST**
people who
discard **FRENCH**
names, not
those who
ACQUIRE them.

Most tragic, however, is when boyfriends become manager-boyfriends simply to hold on to a piece of a woman they happen to be in love with. There are a precious few men who manage to pull it off. They tend to be desperately, romantically heroic, operating quietly in the background without snakeskin jacket or business card, managing to lend both emotional succor and administrative support to a rising spouse. As an example, we could look at the devoted, Vaseline-daubing manager-husband of spunky female boxer Christy Martin, who seems never to spill a drop of his human dignity, even as his wife's career falls increasingly under the management of vile, Himalaya-haired promoter Don King.

DISASTER AND DEBASEMENT

The usual course of events, however, is that the center doesn't hold, and it all goes tragically wrong. The boyfriend-manager begins to lose control, and his first instinct is to immediately wrest back as much control of the situation as he can—through problem-causing, sexual assault, the pathetic smashing of whiskey bottles in film-set trailers, and the cultivation of attention-grabbing facial hair—at the very moment when it has become obvious that his power over his manageree and his social power derived from her have evaporated, that he is headed for that well-peopled graveyard where former boyfriend-managers wander about wraith-like, with empty coke spoons and absurd memories of having once met Gary Coleman.

Manager-boyfriends deal very badly with the sensation of being on the way Out. It's bad enough for a woman to try to break up with someone under normal conditions, as most could tell you—the violence, the tears, the guy lying on the ground in a parking lot screaming “Why,” etc. Then add the erasure of status, party invites, credit line, comprehensive erasure as a viable human being, and the problem is massively compounded.

Paul Snider, the manager-boyfriend's manager-boyfriend discovered Dorothy Stratten working at a Dairy Queen in Vancouver. She had very large breasts. He took some nude shots, and sent them to *Playboy*. Dorothy Stratten became Playmate of the Year for 1980. Yet, there were problems. Snider, a wrong-forks sort of guy who was basically undesirable in every possible way, was evicted from the Playboy Mansion (among other crimes, he put an arm around Hef, another manager-boyfriend's manager-boyfriend). Snider was

definitely not going to accompany Dorothy on the rest of her personal adventure, regardless of the fact that Snider had created it in the first place.

Dorothy commenced the social climbing that is routinely the second part of every manageree's career and began an affair with Peter Bogdanovich. Snider and Stratten separated. For some reason, however, Stratten went to meet her estranged husband. He tied her to a bondage frame of his own invention, and—not necessarily in this order—sodomized her and shot her in the face with a 12-gauge shotgun. We see that if the boyfriend manager is short a sense of wry self-effacement, some awful things may occur.

CHANGING THE SYSTEM FROM OUTSIDE

Obviously it is clear, despite a handful of successes, that the manager-boyfriend thing at some point inevitably

becomes really quite bad for someone, or everyone, concerned. Ultimately, one has to agree with the tube-toqued mullahs of the East that the problem of the "manager-boyfriend" is probably the fatal flaw of Western Civilization. There would

be no such thing as a Dorothy Stratten situation—let alone the Spice Girls or the dreadful case of Ike

Turner or any of the other hideous and degrading cases we

have mentioned—if the manager-boyfriend were simply wiped off the face of the earth.

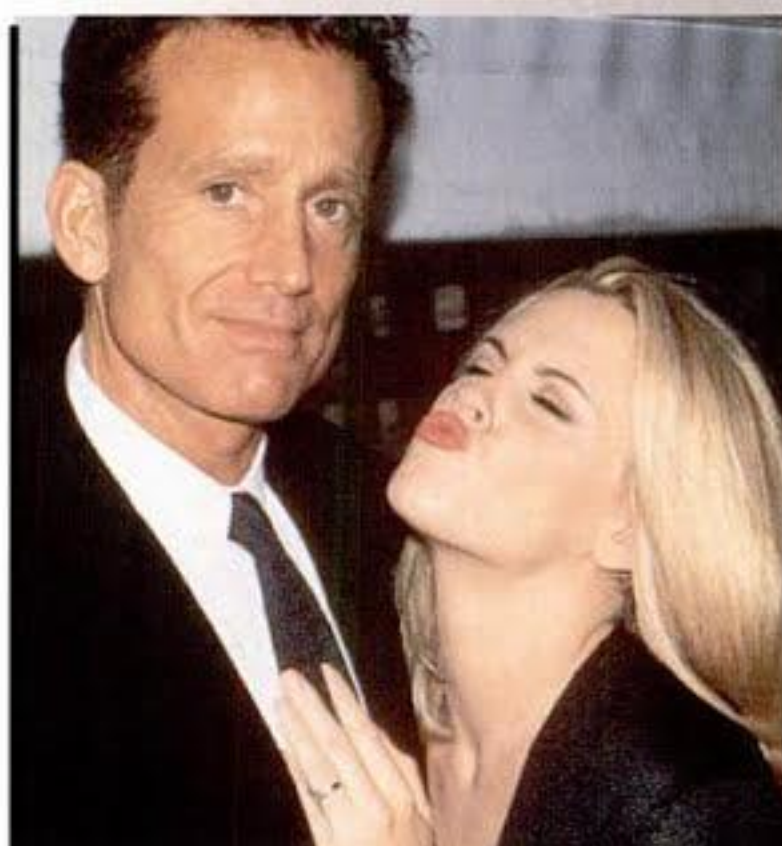
Yet how is this to be done? Is it even possible?

It seems to us, the answer may be no, it is not possible. *At least by conventional means.* Since there will always be exploitative, wispy-mustached, and potentially dangerous manager-boyfriends popping up, the instant that a woman turns out a fetching country tune and makes more money within a week than her mate does laboring for 50 years in the coal pits, or in an investment bank, we have decided with great difficulty that it would be far better, and much safer for everyone concerned, if women simply wore veils, and didn't work at all, according to the Arabic model. It may be patriarchal, but *it could save women.*

Which is why the author and editors of this piece, in the name of Allah the merciful and compassionate, do hereby issue a call to Jihad. We formally offer to collaborate with any Islamic invasion force that thinks it can establish a workable Islamic law in America and thereby end the ceaseless nightmare of both the manager-boyfriend and his products. There are obvious arguments against this course of action, questions of an ethico-politico-historical nature. But for us this course of action seems the only one with any real viability.

Nevertheless, should it prove impossible to impose Islamic sumptuary and religious law, or *sharia*, at least in the entertainment centers of the west—and if it seems that the usual suspects are escaping, for example, under various loopholes and exemptions, and the sword of God has not fallen on the heads of the wicked—then we do ask that we may be gently killed with biological weapons from some dusty half-secret stockpile. In the name of Allah the merciful, the compassionate, we ask for deliverance from the manager-boyfriend.

A Note from the Editors: You will have noticed that there has been no discussion of the "manager-girlfriend." That is because women in our flawed and patriarchal Western society are expected from birth to do a fair amount of "managing" of mates in addition to their duties as bikini-clad sex slaves, without ever becoming, officially, "girlfriend-managers"—with title, cellphone, business cards, an unnecessary studio parking space, or their nick-names stitched onto a red, satiny "touring" jacket. This is the cause for their being omitted from the piece.



TOP: Jenny McCarthy and the astutely diversified Ray Manzella.

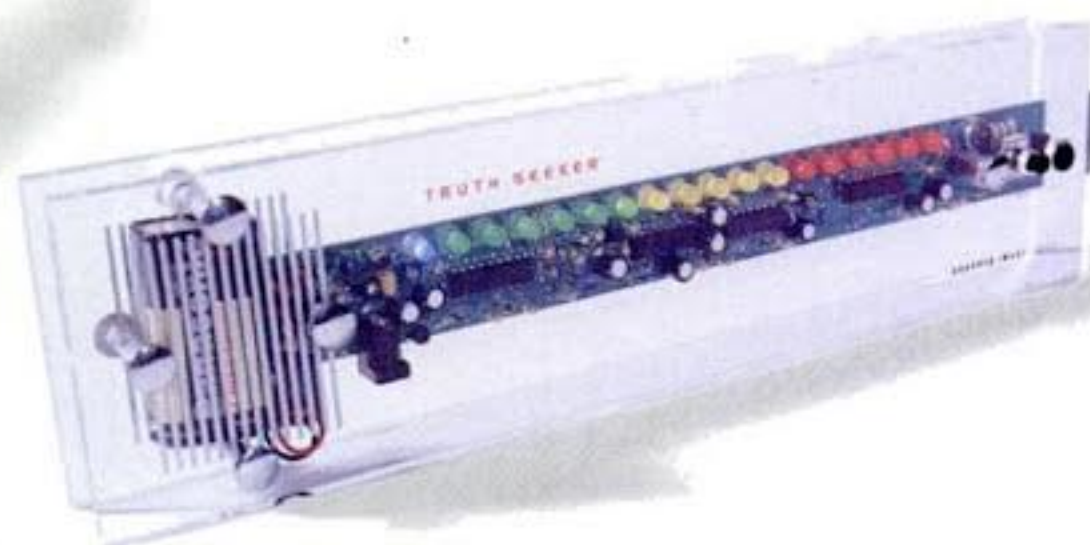
MIDDLE: Frog luminaries Roger Vadim and Catherine Deneuve.

BOTTOM: Force of nature Reba McEntire and manager-husband Narville Blackstock.



SUN MASK

Sure and begod the sun's the man to watch out for. You want to watch your eyes lest them ultra-violent rays fired down from Mars, is it, make a right haimes of the fuckers. Retail price: \$195.

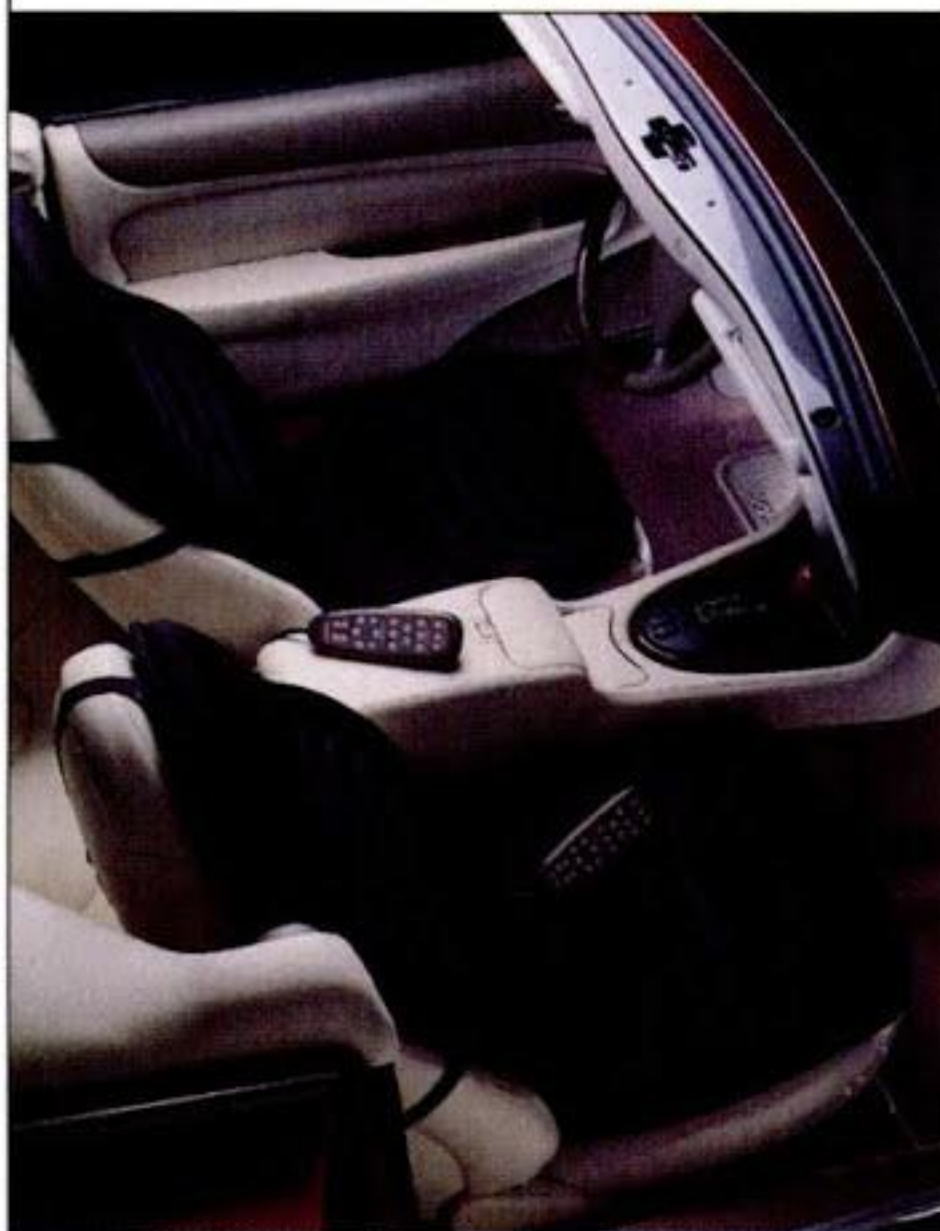


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THE BEST WATCH

Without a watch to your wrist you're a sad bastard when you're short a drink in the vast Sahara of Holy Hour, pounding on the shut of a bloody door with a thirst on you like a bloody vulture, and Black Jimmie Keegan on the other side of the window pointing at the watch on his own wrist and mouthing "Closed," the bastard. Retail price: \$85.





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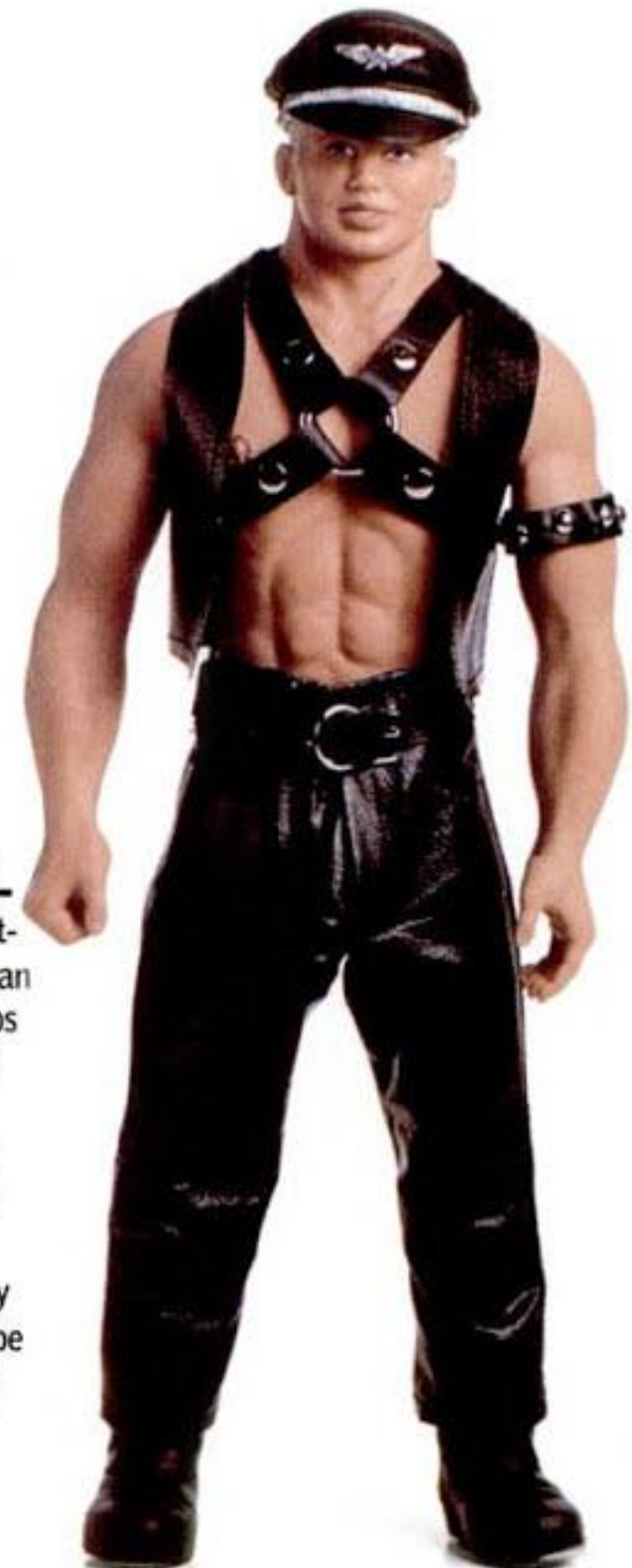
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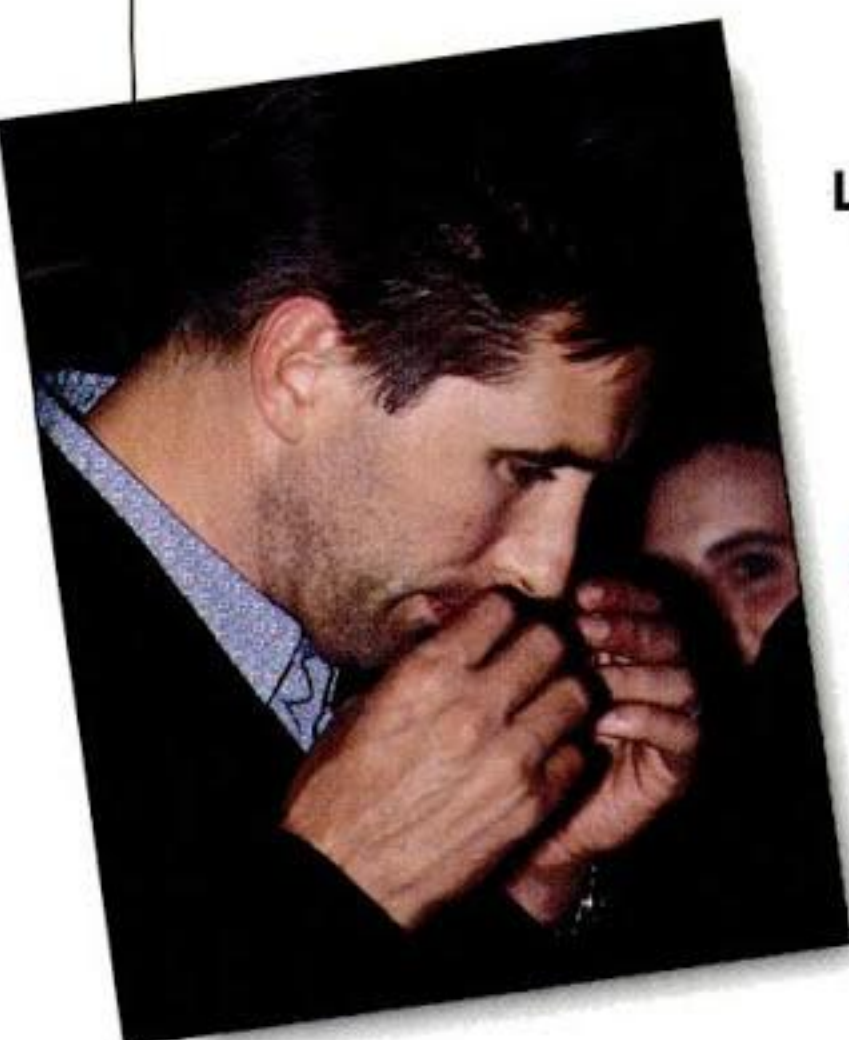
SODOMITE DOLL

One of the more disgusting bloody things you can find laying around shops in urban centers of the great Republic to the west, and good luck to you getting it past customs. As for the size of the hooter on the gay perverted fucker, let's be manfully clear and say he's not a bloody Irishman. Retail for \$49.95.



PARTY POOP

LITIGIOUS SOCIETY SPECIAL



1

2



3

4



5



6



- ① A Baldwin, picking his nose and not doing something else.
- ② A diamond bra in fact is not a girl's best tool for mammillary self-inspection. There is no substitute for a trained professional.
- ③ What's she thinking? What just happened? We know, but our lawyer says we can't tell you.
- ④ Neither of these women is intoxicated, particularly not the one on the left.
- ⑤ The VP after his battery fell out onstage in Iowa. Our source for this story is anonymous. We do not stand behind him.
- ⑥ Any relationship between Ms. Turner and an invisible male standing on a stool exists solely in the mind of the reader.

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SHOOTING THE BREEZE WITH ANNIE LIEBOWITZ'S

ONE-TIME INTERN, WHOM SHE USED AS A HUMAN SANDBAG



ANNIE LIEBOWITZ

"I think my total career earnings from photography are probably hovering around the \$400 mark. One day I hope to have a proper 'art' camera—you know, with the big front part? But those things are seriously pricey."—Annie Liebowitz's former intern.

How did you come to hook up with Ms. Liebowitz in the first place?

Since I was a child, I have always had an interest in still photography. Annie Liebowitz is perhaps the most famous still photographer in the world. I took an internship with her, figuring I would get to watch her set up lighting and observe her style of dealing with photographic subjects.

Sounds like a real photo opportunity.

Ha ha. Except it wasn't. My primary duty was to keep the floor swept. I was helping the archivist by labeling negatives which, incidentally, is really boring. But they fired me from that because my handwriting was too bad. So I was just demoted to running a lot of errands.

Sort of like an intern is supposed to?

It went beyond that. Whenever she was in, we had to have cappuccinos waiting. I was sent out for a fruit plate and cappuccinos whenever she was coming in. She'd freak if she didn't have her cappuccino. Plus she was a monster with her staff. I interned for four months and I only got to watch her on one shoot.

That must have been rewarding.

I was used, as she put it herself, as a "human sandbag." She said, "I need a human sandbag. You. Go sit on that couch."

Right. Sort of a best-seat-in-the-house type of deal.

Not at all. My only job was to sit on this couch and hold the end down, but the shoot went on so long and the lights were so hot that in the end I sort of entered this weird, semi-conscious state.

Cool.

And I sort of heard this voice inside me saying, "Get up. You're meant to be working." So without thinking about it, I just abruptly stood up and all the people who were posing on the other side fell off. That's the only time in my entire four-month internship I think Annie actually made eye contact

with me. She pointed and yelled, "Sit down!" She acted like she was the center of the universe, even when dealing with major celebrities on shoots.

I thought you only went on one shoot.

Well, I guess that's how I imagine she'd be with big-name celebrities. I never saw her with a major celebrity, but I also never saw her slow down and talk to someone as if she cared. I was there on three occasions when she made staff members cry. She never made me cry, but I felt on the verge a few times.

Oh no.

There was this one time she had these gigantic prints hanging up so she could pick which ones she liked. So me and this other intern were told to paint the floor of the studio where the prints were hanging. Not only did we use latex paint—which is really wrong because it shines when light hits it—but I got too close to the wall and got paint on one of these incredibly expensive prints. Now if it were a glossy print, I could have wiped it right off. But they were these special kind of prints on this fibrous paper so I just ended up smearing the paint around. It was like a nightmare. I just ran away before she arrived.

Do you have a problem with your brain? What?

Did you have any other problems with Annie?

On my last day, I rode the elevator up with just her. I'd been there four months. She asked me, "Oh, will you be joining us? Are you a new intern?" And I said, "Well, actually, I just finished a four-month internship. Today's my last day."

Do you think Annie Liebowitz would still be the world's most famous photographer if she spent all her time learning to recognize her interns?

I don't think it would have held her back as much as you're implying.

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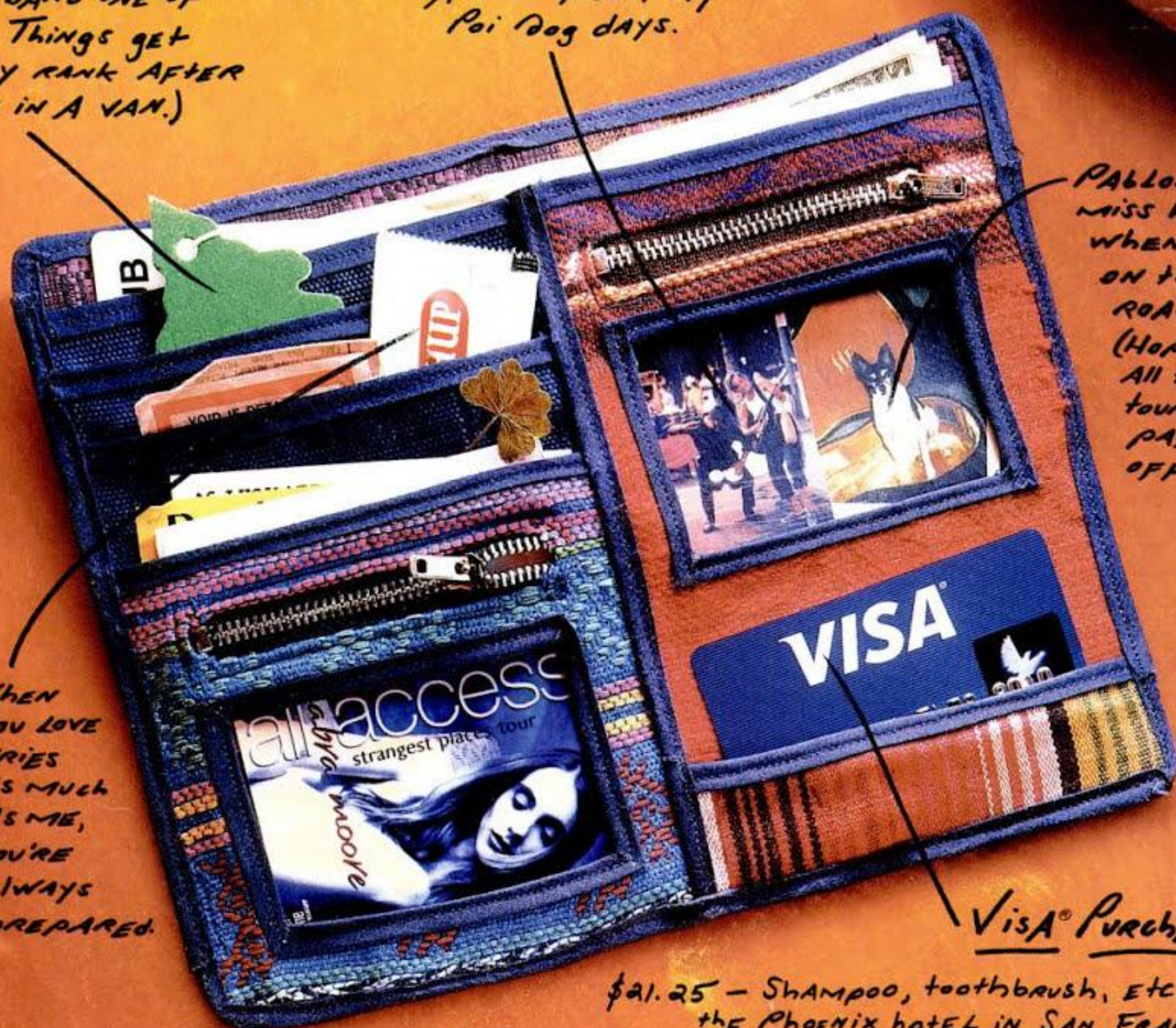
(Singer, songwriter, veteran of van living.)

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(Bought EVERYONE
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A shot from my
Poi Dog days.

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when I'm
on the
road.
(HOPE
all this
touring
pays
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